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A Tale of Two Landscapes: Examining Alienation and Non-Visitation Among Local African American Fishers at Congaree National Park

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A TALE OF TWO LANDSCAPES:
EXAMINING ALIENATION AND NON-VISITATION AMONG
LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FISHERS AT CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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2015

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DEDICATION

For Ric

Graduate studies take a lot of time, energy and focus.

It's not always easy for significant others.

Thank you for being patient and supporting me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people were instrumental in the development of this work. I thank Ric, my family and friends, CISA team members and fellow grad students for their encouragement. To my advisor Kirstin Dow and committee members Amy Mills and Tom Lekan for their wisdom, guidance and profound insights. To Capers Stokes for taking time to teach me how to fish, providing me with fishing gear, connecting me to fishers and hunters in Lower Richland and for checking in on me. To David Shelley and the staff at Congaree National Park for their candidness and openness despite the controversial nature of this research. To Marie Barber Adams, Ed Carr, Carolyn Finney, Cassandra Johnson-Gaither, John Grego, Conor Harrison, Ben Haywood, Frank Henning, Mark Kinzer, David Kneas, John Kupfer, Caroline Nagel, Ronnie Schumann, Payal Shah, Maria Shelley and Bob Weyeneth. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

The Wilderness Act of 1964 limits acceptable activities in federally designated wilderness areas to those associated with leisure, scenic viewing, education and scientific inquiry. These stipulations, which privileged the interests of the early environmental movement's elite white leaders and disregarded uses valued by racial/ethnic minorities and working class groups, continue to inform wilderness management in national parks. This legacy of exclusion is evidenced by national park visitation statistics showing overrepresentation¹ of whites and underrepresentation of African Americans (Meeker, Woods, & Lucas, 1973; P. A. Taylor, Grandjean, & Gramann, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to understand how wilderness management at Congaree National Park (CNP) impacts local African Americans' traditional fishing activities, how fishers perceive those impacts and the implications for visitation. Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, I discovered how a landscape supporting the livelihoods and social bonding of community members became fractured and restricted when it was designated as federal wilderness. This institutional landscape enacted racial and class biases embedded in the Wilderness Act

¹ The percentage of white visitors was greater than the proportion they represented in the sample.

through policies which banned or limited traditional fishing practices while supporting and promoting activities associated with the park's white visitors. Resultantly, most fishers perceived park policies as discriminatory and adjusted their recreation behaviors in a variety of ways.

This study contributes to literatures examining the reasons for high rates of non-visitation to national parks among African Americans as well as African American environmental relations and justice issues beyond those associated with urban industrial pollution. It also calls attention to how open-ended historical and place processes aid in the production racialized spaces in national parks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CNP	Congaree National Park
CSNM.....	Congaree Swamp National Monument
NPS	National Park Service
NWPS	National Wilderness Preservation System
SCDNR	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SERCO	South East Rural Community Outreach

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

WILDERNESS AND AFRICAN AMERICAN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN NATIONAL PARKS

African Americans express a range of views toward wilderness and ideas about the use of natural resources that often diverge from their white counterparts and environmentalists. These differences are rooted in historical and place processes that produced racially and ethnically distinct, environmental relationships, values and cultural landscapes. For some of the influential leaders of the early environmental movement, wilderness was conceptualized as a space for the white and wealthy. These views informed federal legislation creating national parks and the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). When the National Park Service (NPS) imposed its cultural landscape upon that of a closely knit African American community, racial and class biases in federal policy were exposed resulting in alienation of local fishers. As one fisher lamented, “We don't really have anything for us as African Americans where we feel like we can be a part of maybe on the weekend or something like that. It's all geared towards the other race now” (P2, 2014). Though these events are relatively recent, the conditions for estrangement have been in the making for more than a hundred years.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the early American environmental movement was born from the minds and passions of influential, well educated, elite white women and men. Prominent figures like Henry David Thoreau, Abby Williams Hill, Frederick Law Olmstead, Mary Belle King Sherman, John James Audubon, Alice Fletcher, Matilda Coxe Stevenson, John Muir and Franklin D. Roosevelt were central in formulating its philosophy (Kaufman, 2006; Nash, 2001; D. Taylor, 2002). As Romantics and Transcendentalists fascinated by frontier mythology, preservationists venerated the unworked, uninhabited American wilderness as an expression of a national identity. Leaders lobbied to protect it by restricting its use to activities associated with leisure, scenic viewing and scientific learning.

Ultimately, their efforts were realized when these standards became codified federal legislation. For instance, in establishing the NPS, the Organic Act of 1916 adopted preservationists' interests in aesthetic appreciation and leisure. Section 1.1 reads,

The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life [*sic*] therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. (US Congress, 1916)

The Organic Act also reflects how environmental protection and nationalism were coupled to present the NPS as a public good. The lands within the national park system, its authors assert, convey “a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity and recognition of their superb environmental quality through their inclusion jointly with each other in one national park system preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people of the United States . . .”.

Preservationists’ nationalist agenda is also conspicuous in the Wilderness Act of 1964. This statute established the NWPS, a conglomeration of federally protected lands known as designated wilderness areas. It also sets forth mandates for federal wilderness management in national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges and lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). According to the Act, the NWPS

shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness . .
.. (US Congress, 1964)

Both pieces of legislation seek to advance the idea of wilderness as a national heritage and public resource but in practice, wilderness seems to favor groups whose identities, values and uses align with those of the elite white leaders of preservation. Their ideals became the law of the land in Section 2(c) the Wilderness Act.

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

A superficial reading of this passage reveals a carefully considered effort to preserve natural resources for the use and enjoyment of the American public. But upon scrutiny, we find it replete with racial and class biases. Defining wilderness as an

uninhabited space practically erases Native Americans from places they knew as home (Merchant, 2003) while use of the term *primitive* evokes imperialist beliefs in a racial hierarchy (Finney, 2014). Prescribed activities in wilderness areas reflect the interests of the white, elite preservationists who viewed wilderness as a place for leisure and learning – a conception which leaves little room for wildland workers such as subsistence hunters, fishers, foragers and loggers. Through delineations excluding people of color and working class groups, preservationists created wilderness for the white and wealthy (DeLuca & Demo, 2008).

Wilderness, as conceptualized by proponents of the early environmental movement, arrived in the Southeast much later than the West. In the Southeast, agriculture defined the human relationship with the natural environment. Thus Southerners came to understand wild nature through work rather than leisure (Stewart, 2005). When America's first national park, Yellowstone was established in 1872, the area that is now Congaree National Park was a resource commons where locals ranged their livestock, hunting, fished, foraged and maintained social relationships.

The For African Americans, perceptions of wilderness and the use of its resources are largely informed by African environmental worldviews where land, kinship and community comprised a system of reciprocity (Blum, 2002; Millner, 1995). African American environmental ethos is also shaped by a history of oppression and subsistence practices (C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004). When the environmental movement was gaining traction, many African Americans were enslaved. Wilderness areas concealed innumerable rapes, beatings and lynchings. African Americans also came to understand

American wilderness through work such as agriculture, fishing, hunting, medicinal knowledge, maroonage and spiritual practices (Blum, 2002; Glave & Stoll, 2006; C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004). For the ancestors of the African American fishers represented in this study, many of these environmental relationships persisted after Emancipation.

During Reconstruction, rights to landownership were gained but quickly rescinded as Southern whites clung to the belief in their right to black labor (C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004; Starkey, 2005; D. Taylor, 2002). However, some freed women and men were able realize the dream of landownership. In 1869, the South Carolina legislature, dominated by African American males, established the South Carolina Land Commission to facilitate the redistribution of land among freed people and whites who did not own property (Almlie et al., 2009). In southeast Richland County, South Carolina, freed women and men purchased property from the commission which allowed them to build a community with small farms, industries, churches and schools. Like their environmental relationships, the lands acquired through Reconstruction efforts were passed on to future generations. Many of the fishers interviewed for this study, were descendants of the freed people who purchased land from the South Carolina Land Commission and therefore, owned land in Lower Richland.

As the rights and benefits gained during Reconstruction disintegrated, Jim Crow segregation began to shape African Americans' environmental relationships. Lynchings, beatings and exploitative systems of logging, turpentine and sharecropping became part of African Americans' wildland experiences. Segregation also defined their outdoor leisure activities. During the first half of the twentieth century, national park policies

towards people of color often followed local laws and customs (Shumaker, 2005). For example, the Massenburg Bill requiring segregation in places of public assembly passed in the Virginia legislature in 1926. Subsequently, separate facilities for blacks were built at George Washington Birthplace National Monument and Shenandoah National Park. The ill treatment of blacks and inferior accommodations at both parks were documented in letters by an African American visitor and an employee at the Department of the Interior (Shumaker, 2005).

Eventually, racial violence, low wages, labor constraints, inferior education, judicial injustice and agricultural disasters prompted many African Americans to move North in search of opportunities for social and economic advancement (D. Taylor, 2002). Between 1910 and 1970, approximately six million African Americans migrated from the rural south to northern industrial cities. But as northern black populations swelled, discrimination there intensified prompting many to join the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. In addition to desegregation, activists mobilized around environmental issues such workers' rights, occupational health and safety, industrial pollution and equal access to parks and beaches. By the 1980s, the Environmental Justice Movement emerged as a grassroots campaign largely comprised of people of color, women and working class citizens in an effort to protest differential exposure to environmental hazards and access to resources.

More recently, environmental justice advocates have become increasingly critical of environmental groups whose policies and practices often favor its white elite and middle class supporters. In 1990, environmental justice leaders co-signed a widely

publicized letter to the “Big 10” environmental groups accusing them of racial bias in policy planning and hiring. They also challenged leaders to develop more inclusionary practices and address pollution issues in communities of the poor and people of color.

Allegations made by authors of the letter to the “Big 10” have validity as racial and class biases pervading the early environmental movement seem to persist. In Taylor’s study (2014) of 293 large and small environmental organizations (including the NPS) minorities comprised 16% or less of their staffs and boards and only 12% of leadership positions. Members and volunteers of the organizations included in the study were predominantly white.

A similar pattern of racial composition appears among visitors to national parks. In 2009, a nationwide survey assessed recent visitation to a national park among African Americans, Whites, Asians, American Indians/Native Alaskans and Hispanics. While Whites constituted 70% of the sample, they represented 78% of all recent visitors. African Americans were the most underrepresented group comprising 12% of the sample but only 7% of recent visitors (P. A. Taylor et al., 2011). Such discrepancies are problematic for the NPS given U.S. population projections. The U.S. Bureau of the Census predicts that by 2060, people of color will comprise more than half of the U.S. population (US Census Bureau Public Information, n.d.).

This kind of demographic shift could have implications for how NPS and other environmental organizations operate. Bonta and Jordan contend, “Communities of color will continue to have mounting influence on society and politics, including the distribution of public finances, the way cities develop and grow, and the strength and

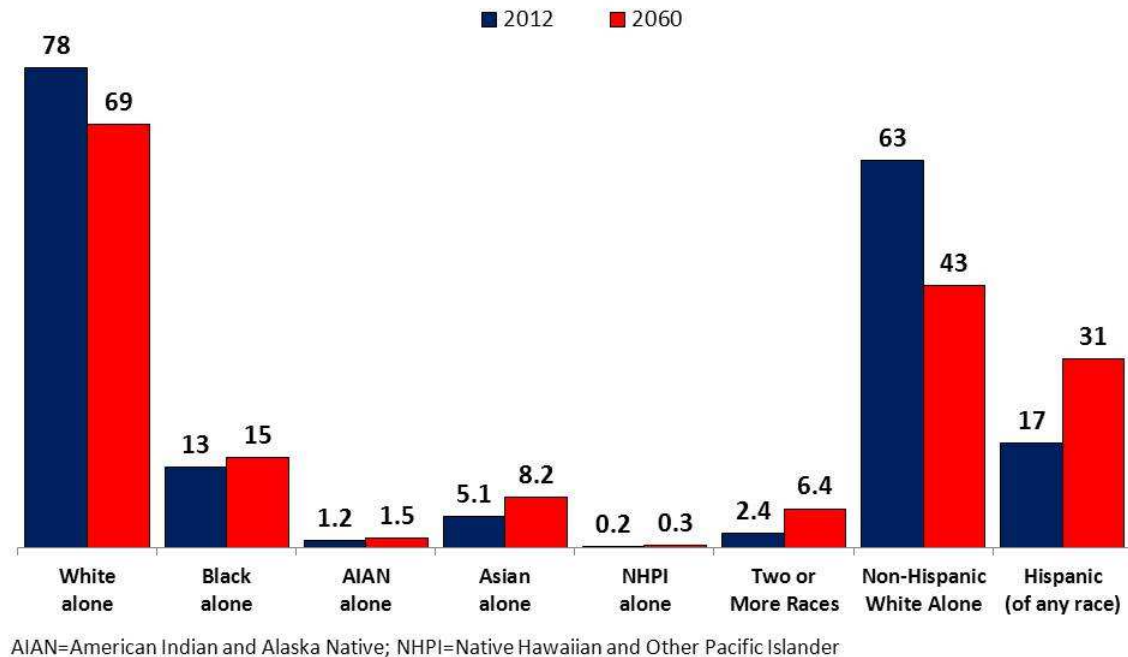


Figure 1.1 Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2012 and 2060: Percent by Total Population. (US Census Bureau Public Information, n.d.)

creation of environmental laws and policies” (2007, p. 20). In their report examining racial and ethnic diversity in the national park system, Taylor et al. conclude, “demographic change will affect how parks are visited, and thus how the National Park System is valued, what kinds of development are appropriate, and who votes on behalf of parks. Therefore, the growth of population subgroups that have not traditionally included many park-goers requires the attention of the National Park Service” (2011, p. 29).

With change looming and facing criticism from environmental justice leaders, some environmental organizations have taken action. The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and National Park Service are working to diversify their staffs and attract more

nonwhite supporters. The NPS has partnered with minority groups and developed several internships and programs focused on cultural resources and minority engagement to attract a more diverse base of supporters, visitors and pool of potential hires. But the numbers indicate lingering barriers thwarting efforts to foster more diversity within the agency.

Those reporting on the lack of diversity in environmental organizations and national parks see their predicaments as intertwined and linked to the environmental movement's history of racial exclusion (Mock, 2014; Navarro, 2010; Nelson, 2014). Some believe the viability of the NPS partly hinges on its ability to redefine wilderness in ways relevant to people of color.

The NPS policies examined in this research involve those enacted at Congaree National Park (CNP). Situated in Lower Richland, a historically African American community in rural South Carolina, CNP provides a case study offering insight into how wilderness management may alienate African Americans from national parks. In particular, the experiences of local African American fishers instantiate how racial and class biases in the Wilderness Act and thus wilderness management, resulted in displacement, alienation and non-visitation.

Purpose of Study

In order to better understand issues related to African American non-visitation to national parks, this research examines how wilderness management at CNP impacts local African Americans' traditional fishing activities, how they perceive those impacts

and the implications for visitation. Ultimately, this study reveals how wilderness management created a racialized landscape designed to promote the interests and activities of white middle class and international visitors while prohibiting or limiting uses valued by local African American fishers and the broader community. These inequalities led to perceptions of discrimination which alienated fishers and discouraged some from visiting the park. Though this study presents a unique case of displacement, many lessons are transferrable to other cases and studies related to race, ethnicity and non-visitation.

African American fishers were the chosen population for this study because they are the primary source of African American visitors to CNP. Furthermore, local fishers maintain intergenerational ties to the land that is now park property despite low visitation to some sites and non-participation in other park activities. In short, the activity of fishing is a nexus at which CNP and local African Americans converge in a way that exposes the disparate environmental histories and views contributing to differing patterns of use, inequality, alienation and non-visitation.

Thesis Overview

The remaining chapters will situate my research within existing literature, explain findings, discuss its contribution to existing literature and explore how it can be used to address the NPS's diversity dilemma. Chapter two seeks an understanding of African American wildland relations and the roots of underrepresentation in national parks

through an exploration of current literature. In addition, it outlines theoretical concepts and describes the conceptual model used to approach this research.

Chapter three describes the methods used to conduct this study. It also reflects on how positionality and subjectivity may have influenced results and steps taken to assure trustworthiness.

Chapters four, five and six apply the conceptual model to convey and discuss the findings of this research. Chapter four offers a brief history of the early environmental movement to show how the racial and class prejudices of its leaders informed the basic principles of the Wilderness Act. Next, it explains how local environmentalists, despite opposition from locals, successfully campaigned to establish CNP as federally designated wilderness and despite opposition from the local community.

Chapter five briefly describes the environmental history of African Americans, the place history of fishers, and their present day environmental relationships to demonstrate how historical and place processes facilitated the creation of a community landscape that helped fishers' families survive and nurture social relationships. Chapter six discusses what happened when NPS's institutional landscape disrupted local African American fishers' community landscape, the perceptions it engendered and how fishers adjusted their recreation behaviors. It also outlines how findings contribute to our knowledge of African American wildland relations and the reasons for low visitation rates to national parks.

Chapter seven provides recommendations for creating equitable access to the parks' natural resources and developing culturally sensitive programming that will

encourage local African American fishers and other community members to visit CNP.

Lastly, chapter eight summarizes findings, reiterates the relevance of this research, discusses paths for future research and offers some final thoughts about wilderness and social justice.

CHAPTER 2

AFRICAN AMERICAN PREFERENCES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Authors of sociology, history, leisure, tourism and natural resource management have examined various aspects African Americans' perceptions of wildlands and participation in wildland recreation. The following literature review summarizes some of these studies and identifies areas where this research can help expand our understanding of African Americans' wildland relationships, recreational preferences and choices to visit national parks.

The first section highlights studies examining African American park preferences and views of CNP. It also describes theories used to explain the reasons for low visitation rates to national parks and other wildland areas. The second section offers a critique of existing research and explains the contributions of this study. Finally, the third section describes the conceptual model used to discuss research findings.

Racial/Ethnic Variation in Outdoor Preferences

Research on racial and ethnic differences in outdoor preferences take two main entry points. One emphasizes how race and ethnicity correlates to specific ways of perceiving various types of outdoor spaces while the other focuses on how these factors

influence choices for outdoor recreation. Some studies link African Americans' spatial and activity preferences to a history of oppression and subsistence practices.

Spatial Preferences

Johnson and Bowker (2004) contend that African Americans' low visitation rates to wildland areas and non-participation in dominant forms of wildland recreation (i.e. hiking, camping, canoeing etc.) can be attributed to a complex environmental history. Wildlands were places where African Americans were able to escape from slavery and form maroon societies (Diouf, 2014; Schweninger, 2002; Starkey, 2005). Many maintained intimate relationships with wildlands through spiritual practices, subsistence activities (e.g., hunting, fishing and farming) and developing of knowledge of medicinal plants (Blum, 2002; Glave & Stoll, 2006; C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004; Starkey, 2005). Conversely, wildlands were also where African Americans endured the brutality of slavery, experienced indescribable violence such as rapes, beatings and lynchings, and toiled under inhumane conditions in logging and turpentine industries (Blum, 2002; Glave & Stoll, 2006; C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004; Nelson, 2014; Outka, 2008; P. A. Taylor et al., 2011). These experiences, Johnson and Bowker argue, reside in African Americans' collective memories creating ambivalent views of wildlands which diverge from those of the whites (2004).

Some studies suggest that these collective memories shaped an aversion towards wildlands for many African Americans. In a 1994 survey of rural residents in counties surrounding Apalachicola National Forest, African American respondents reported fewer

visits to the area and less favorable impressions of wildlands than whites (C. Johnson, Horan, & Pepper, 1997). Similarly, Virden and Walker (1999) found that black college students in the western U.S. perceived forests to be dangerous while their white counterparts viewed them as pleasant. Authors of both studies attributed African Americans' negative impressions of wildlands to historical oppression.

These findings are also consistent with Kaplan and Talbot's (1988) study of preferences for natural settings among urban residents in Michigan. Findings showed that black participants preferred open outdoor environments with widely spaced vegetation and a large range of visibility while whites favored outdoor environments with dense vegetation. These correlations, Johnson and her colleagues posit, suggest the possibility of a general aversion towards wilderness that cuts across geographic and intragroup differences (1997).

Research examining local African Americans' perceptions of Rocky Mountain National Park link non-visitation to both historical, economic, cognitive and cultural factors (Erickson, Johnson, & Kivel, 2009). Those who became familiarized with national parks as children were more likely to travel to national parks as adults. Some participants lacked the economic resources to participate in the wildland recreation. The authors linked this barrier to historical discrimination in the workplace, politics and education which resulted in low income and high levels of poverty for many African Americans today. Participants also reported barriers relating to Jim Crow laws and segregation practices which produced a fear of traveling outside of one's ethnic space and perceptions of wildland recreation as a "white people thing", culturally

unacceptable for blacks. This finding supports Johnson and Bowker's conclusion that collective memories of historical oppression have served to alienate some African Americans from wildland environments.

Activity Preferences

Recreation management and leisure literature show that in addition to diverging perceptions of wildlands, blacks and whites also seem to use parks differently. Dwyer and Gobster (1992) found that blacks were more likely to use Illinois State Parks with amenities for social gatherings and sports. They also valued parks with camping facilities. Whites were more likely to visit parks with natural environments offering the opportunity to "get away from people". They also reported preferences for hiking and other wildland activities. Gobster and Delgado (1993) discovered different interests and preferences among black and white visitors at Lincoln Park in Chicago. While blacks tended to visit the park in groups and participated in social activities, whites were more often involved with activities that could be accomplished alone such as walking.

In a study of households in the continental U.S., blacks and whites exhibited similar rates of participation in activities associated with urban settings including picnicking, tennis and swimming (R. Washburne & Wall, 1980). Their rates of participation in some wildland activities such as fishing, horseback riding and driving vehicles off-road were also comparable. However, blacks were significantly less likely to participate in other wildland activities such as hiking, camping and sightseeing.

These studies consistently suggest that African Americans prefer managed spaces and activities offering social opportunities while whites are more likely to seek out wildland settings and solitary experiences. Findings reinforce the idea that there are distinctive cultural trends in how blacks and whites view natural settings and use park spaces. Some of the views African Americans expressed in these studies have resonance in research examining visitation at CNP.

African Americans and CNP

Only a few studies examine African American visitation/non-visitation at CNP. They consist of surveys of park visitors and non-visitors and focus groups exploring local African Americans' reasons for non-visitation. In a 2012 survey of park visitors (N=3,240), 93% of respondents identified as white while 3% identified as black or African American (Begly, Le, & Hollenhorst, 2013). Most reported engaging in hiking, bird watching, canoeing/kayaking and backpacking/camping while visiting CNP and attending a variety of educational programs.

Other research consists of surveys of surrounding-area residents and focus groups exploring local African Americans' perceptions of the park. In Lawton and Weaver's survey (2008) of 455 white and blacks residing in urban areas near CNP, African Americans accounted for 13.2% of visitors and 43% non-visitors. Respondents reported a number of constraints to visitation. Non-visitors with multiple constraints

tended to be African American, older, long-time residents of Columbia² with lower incomes.

For African American focus group participants in Le and Holmes' study (2012), fear of wildlands, economic limitations, perceptions of racial discrimination, lack of awareness and misconceptions about the park were the primary reasons for non-visitation. Some participants were totally unaware of CNP while others believed it was a swamp with no trails or facilities. Many were unsure if the park provided amenities or activities that suited their interests while others believed the park charged an entry fee and offered no accommodations for the elderly or disabled. The authors argue that some of these barriers to visitation can be overcome with culturally-nuanced communication, presentation and programming.

Explanations for Racial/Ethnic Variations in Wildland Visitation

Marginality theory, discrimination theory and ethnicity or subculture theory are three major theoretical perspectives that may account for African American non-visitation to national parks. Though these theories shed light on the causes of non-visitation, each has limitations to consider.

Marginality theory contends that past discrimination produced differential access to the socioeconomic resources that would allow African Americans to visit national parks and participate in wildland recreation. Proponents of marginality theory use indicators such as access to transportation, employment, education status,

² Columbia is the capitol of South Carolina located about twenty miles northwest of CNP.

occupation and income to explain the barriers to wildland visitation and recreation (M. Floyd, 1999; Le & Holmes, 2012; R. F. Washburne, 1978). However, marginality theory does not account for variations in socioeconomic status within groups, nor does it explain on-site usage patterns, the effects of contemporary discrimination or why reasons for non-visitation may vary among African American groups (M. Floyd, 1998).

Discrimination theory holds that perceptions of discrimination in wildland recreation environments have an adverse affect on visitation (M. Floyd, 1999). In Le and Holmes' study (2012), participants perceived the lack of people of color on CNP staff as indicative of racial discrimination. Some stated that they would be more likely to visit if the park had a multicultural staff and more African American visitors. These findings support literature suggesting that ethnic diversity and representation in park spaces is an important factor in African Americans' outdoor recreational preferences (Ho et al., 2005). Gramman (1996) proposes that perceptions of discrimination may lead African Americans to seek alternative sites and activities for outdoor recreation.

Though discrimination theory has support in empirical research, the types of discrimination visitors may experience are not well understood (M. Floyd, 1999; Sharaievskia, Stodolska, & Floyd, 2014). Racial discrimination may not always be overt and inter-personal. For example, park officials may unwittingly institute culturally insensitive practices (Elmendorf, Willits, & Sasidharan, 2005). Discrimination may also be embedded in formal laws and legislation.

Ethnicity or subcultural theory was first proposed by Washburn (1978) in a study of leisure differences between urban residents in California. After controlling for

socioeconomic factors, he found differences in activity preferences between blacks and whites suggesting that culture and ethnicity may inform choices for recreational activities. His theory is supported by research finding culturally distinct patterns in the ways blacks and whites viewed wildlands and engaged in outdoor activities (Dwyer & Gobster, 1992; Erickson et al., 2009; Gobster & Delgado, 1993; C. Johnson et al., 1997; Kaplan & Talbot, 1988; Le & Holmes, 2012; Virden & Walker, 1999). Cultural or ethnic differences may cause some groups to avoid recreational spaces or activities perceived as belonging to another racial/ethnic group. Gramann and Floyd (1993) hypothesize that leisure attitudes and behavior may play an important role in maintaining cultural identity. Despite wide support, ethnicity/subcultural theory has several weaknesses. For example, it does not specify indicators for measuring ethnic or cultural difference nor does it consider how views and behaviors may vary within groups.

The literatures examining African American wildland relations and underrepresentation in wildland recreation offer a variety of ways to begin understanding differential patterns of participation and use. However, many explanations seem overgeneralized, failing to capture the myriad ways African Americans experience wildland settings.

These studies are complicated by Finney's (2014) work on the racialization of nature in America. She argues that a legacy of racial discrimination and violence produced unequal access to resources for African Americans and impacted how they engaged with nature as well as how their environmental relations are perceived and represented. Through an exploration of African Americans' environmental narratives,

Finney uncovers rich and varied historical and contemporary environmental relationships. Her research dispels the “myth of detachment” regarding African Americans’ relationship with nature and encourages us to broaden our definition of ‘environment’.

The next section identifies additional relevant topics not addressed in existing literature but crucial in helping us develop a greater understanding of African American wildland relations and visitation. These include the diversity of perspectives and preferences among African Americans who visit wildlands and the role of history and place in producing unique environmental relationships among subgroups.

Critiques of Existing Research

Existing literature neglects to explore topics and methodologies that would enhance our understanding of African American environmental relations and wildland non-visitation. Firstly, the perspectives of African Americans who visit national parks and participate in wildland recreation are ignored. Secondly, survey methods often fail to convey the complexities and diverse viewpoints that can be obtained through qualitative methods. Thirdly, studies of African Americans residing in the southeastern U.S. and rural areas are lacking. Finally, current studies do not lend adequate attention to the significance of history and place in producing culturally specific environmental values and relationships.

A leitmotif emerging from this literature review is the prevalence of studies and theoretical perspectives focusing on reasons for non-participation and

underrepresentation in dominant modes of outdoor recreation. In taking these approaches, researchers have neglected other pertinent issues. For example, few studies have explored the views of African Americans who *do* participate in wildland recreation. Even fewer have sought to understand African American outdoor recreation on its own terms rather than comparing them to those of whites. In Begley et al.'s (2013) survey of visitation to CNP respondents were chosen through random sampling of individuals visiting the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. However, most local African American fishers do not visit the Harry Hampton Visitor Center and therefore, the study did not reflect their numbers or park activities. Therefore, some statistics discussed in the report are skewed toward certain types of visitors, namely whites and non-locals, yielding an inaccurate portrayal of park visitation. This exclusion suggests that focus on dominant forms of visitation and participation may cause invisibility of African American wildland relationships.

Authors have also ignored the cultural influences underlying white outdoor participation. For example, some scholars point out that whites are overrepresented in visitation to national parks (M. Floyd, 1999; P. A. Taylor et al., 2011). This phenomenon, Floyd argues, deserves inquiry.

Data collection methods in many studies involve surveys which often do not capture the experiences, values and beliefs informing respondents' perceptions and preferences. For instance, in Le and Holmes' (2012) study of the factors associated with non-visitation to CNP among nearby urban residents, respondents were presented with a finite range answers thereby limiting the perspectives they were able communicate.

Furthermore, the survey left little room for respondents to explain their answers. This type of supporting information could enhance our understanding of the deeper social, cultural and ideological issues underlying non-visitation.

Research on African Americans residing in rural areas is particularly lacking. Rural lifestyles may place groups in frequent contact with wildlands shaping views and uses that may be different from their urban counterparts. These types of studies may offer a broader perspective of African American wildland relations and visitation. Studies of African Americans' wildland relations in the Southeast are also needed since historical race relations and views about the environment differ from those of other regions of the U.S.

Lastly, current research often fails to link the problem of underrepresentation and non-participation with history and place. For instance, research by Le and Holmes (2012) and Lawton and Weaver (2008) offered valuable insights into the reasons why African Americans do not visit CNP however, neither probed the historical and contemporary relationships and place processes contributing to estrangement from the park. Few empirical studies (Erickson et al., 2009; C. Johnson et al., 1997; Le & Holmes, 2012) attempt to weave these multiple strands together to reveal a more complex tapestry of relationships and processes undergirding current issues.

In using qualitative methods to examine non-visitation and alienation among African Americans who reside in rural southeastern U.S. and enjoy wildland recreation, this research offers an alternative perspective on the factors that can alienate African Americans from national parks.

In order to address gaps in the literature and explore connections across theoretical fields, this study employs a conceptual framework drawing from theoretical frames for examining history, place and racialization of park spaces.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual approach for this study employs *landscape* and *place* concepts to show how culture, history, place, personal characteristics and perceptions shape choices for park use. In doing so, the effects of racial/ethnic differences and inequalities become major factors in determining whether and how African Americans (and possibly other minority groups) decide to use park spaces.

While scholars have devoted attention to the socioeconomic factors underlying African Americans' park visitation/non-visitation and use, few have delved into the historical and place processes shaping these relationships. For example, the legacies of segregation, suburbanization of prime recreational facilities and discriminatory policies continue to reverberate in park management and in how users' perceive and use parks. (Sharaievska et al., 2014).

Byrne and Wolch (2009) suggest an approach to race, space and urban park use that employs political ecology, cultural landscape and environmental justice perspectives. In their model, urban park use is comprised of four elements. The first component relates to a park's historical and cultural context. In the past, parks played powerful roles in reproducing racial prejudices and inequalities. The racial politics of park development include ideologies of land use, planning philosophy and the histories

of development which resulted in racialization through the “legal and symbolic inscription of space” (2009, p. 753). The second leg of Byrne and Wolch’s framework is park space or the physical characteristics of a park that makes it welcoming for some users and alienating for others. Park design, facilities, sanctioned uses, signage, accessibility, staff and the character of the surrounding community aid potential users in determining if a park is safe, accessible and welcoming.

The third element relates to the subjectivities or social characteristics of potential users such as socioeconomic status, age, sex, race, awareness, views toward nature, leisure preferences, location and mobility. Prior studies have shown that some of these variables have implications for African American visitation (Erickson et al., 2009; Lawton & Weaver, 2008; Le & Holmes, 2012). Each element influences the fourth component of the framework: potential users’ perceptions of a park. Depending on the historical and cultural context of park development, the physical environment, perceptions, potential users’ social characteristics and individual perceptions, a park may be perceived in myriad ways leading to avoidance or distinctive uses of park space. In the case of disadvantaged groups such as racial/ethnic minorities and working class groups, these variables often serve to discourage park use. The Byrne and Wolch contend, “Together, these forces tend to produce spatially uneven development of park resource and access, typically to the detriment of communities of color and disadvantage, and this disproportionately affecting their health and well-being” (2009, p. 751). Figure 2.1 shows the delineations and interactions of Byrne and Wolch’s framework.

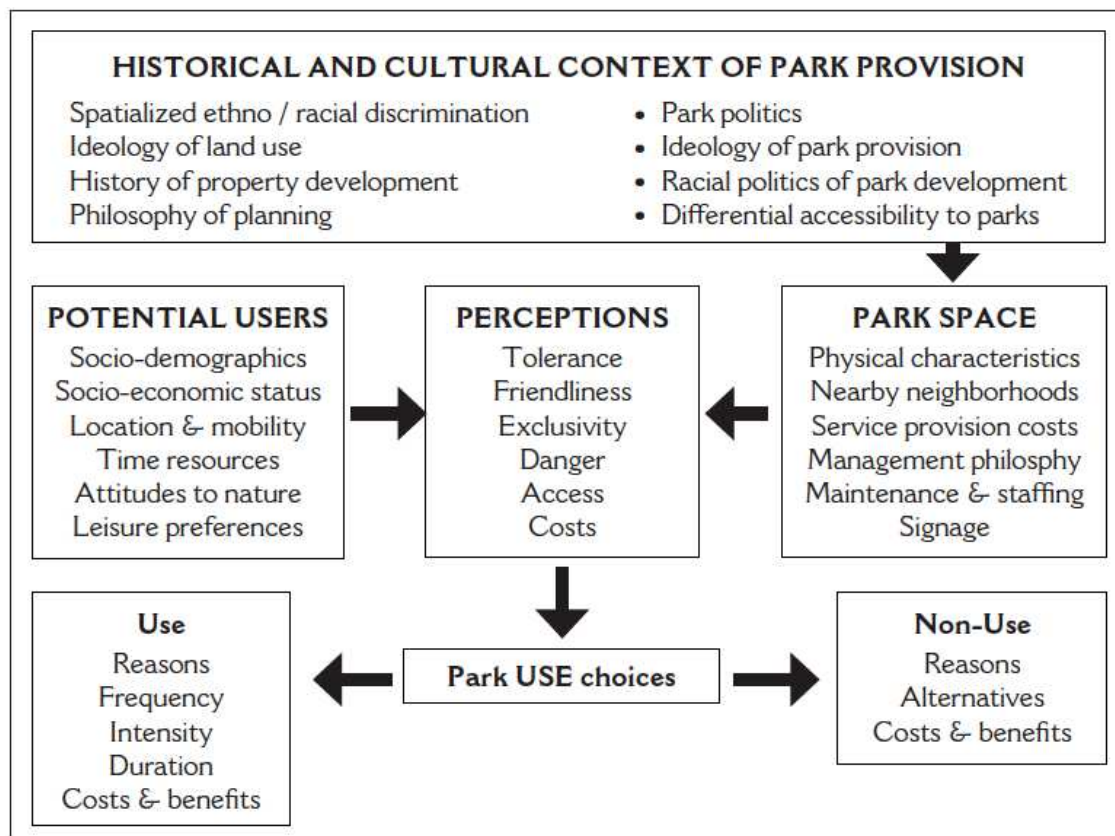


Figure 2.1 Framework for Race, Space and Park Use

Through this framework, Byrne and Wolch argue for a broader conceptualization of visitation/non-visitation and park use than what traditional literature presents. While most literatures focus on racial/ethnic, socioeconomic and personal characteristics of African Americans, their model also advances the significance of history, politics and place as major factors contributing choices for park use. This study supports their argument by tracing African American fishers' activities, experiences and perceptions of CNP to their roots in history and place.

Though their framework is intended to assess park use in urban areas, it is translatable to the rural, localized, national park setting associated with my research. However, it neglects to include the historical and cultural context of potential users along with place as important variables contributing to potential users' decisions. Furthermore, terminology in their framework could be enhanced by language that implies the interconnectivity of concepts and ideas. My adaptation of this framework, grounded in empirical data, maintains the basic structure of their framework but uses the concepts of *place* and *landscape* to capture the multiple facets of experience and meaning making not represented in Byrne and Wolch's framework.

Place concepts (i.e., sense of place, place attachment, place meaning, place identity, place history etc.) highlight the significance of bounded space in producing cultural and social relations. Places contain culturally-defined activities, objects, relationships, rules and expectations that make them meaningful. In essence, they are "'carved' out of space by cultures" (Anderson, 2009, p. 38). Places bind people through common histories, experiences and identities enabling the formation of communities (Crang, 1998). Though places are human constructions, it is important to recognize the influence of non-humans in place making (Sack, 2004). For example, insects, seasonal cycles and natural disasters can all affect how we make place.

Landscape refers to the social construction of the environment. Lewis regards landscapes as our "unwitting autobiography" – physical manifestations of our values, ambitions and trepidations (1979, p. 12). As such, all landscapes hold cultural meanings and can be read as one would read a book to learn about the land and its people. For

Lewis, history and the human-nature relationship should be important considerations when deciphering messages hidden in landscapes. Cosgrove (1998) takes a similar approach describing landscapes as creations of our own particularities. “. . . landscape denotes the external work mediated through subjective human experience Landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world” (p. 13).

Because landscapes express our worldviews, ideologies, emotions and values, they can also be seen as materialized discourses. Through landscapes, Shein (1997) posits, multiple discourses compete and order human behavior. In this research, I envision CNP as holding two landscapes, each expressing discourses that conflict with those of the other. A “community landscape” is derived from local African American fishers’ place history, consumptive uses of the property and social relationships dating back to the late 1860’s. CNP also contains an “institutional landscape” emerging in 1976 from discourses associated with the early environmental movement which valued non-consumptive leisure. When the institutional landscape displaced the community landscape, conflicting discourses exposed inequalities in federal wilderness legislation.

Figure 2.2 is an adaptation of Byrne and Wolch’s model extended to accommodate a more explicit focus on place and landscape. Like their framework, it presents history and culture as major factors determining park use. However, this framework considers both the park’s and potential users’ historical and cultural contexts to show how differences in place, values, ideology and identity can mediate perceptions and choices for park use. This framework also accounts for how users’ historical and

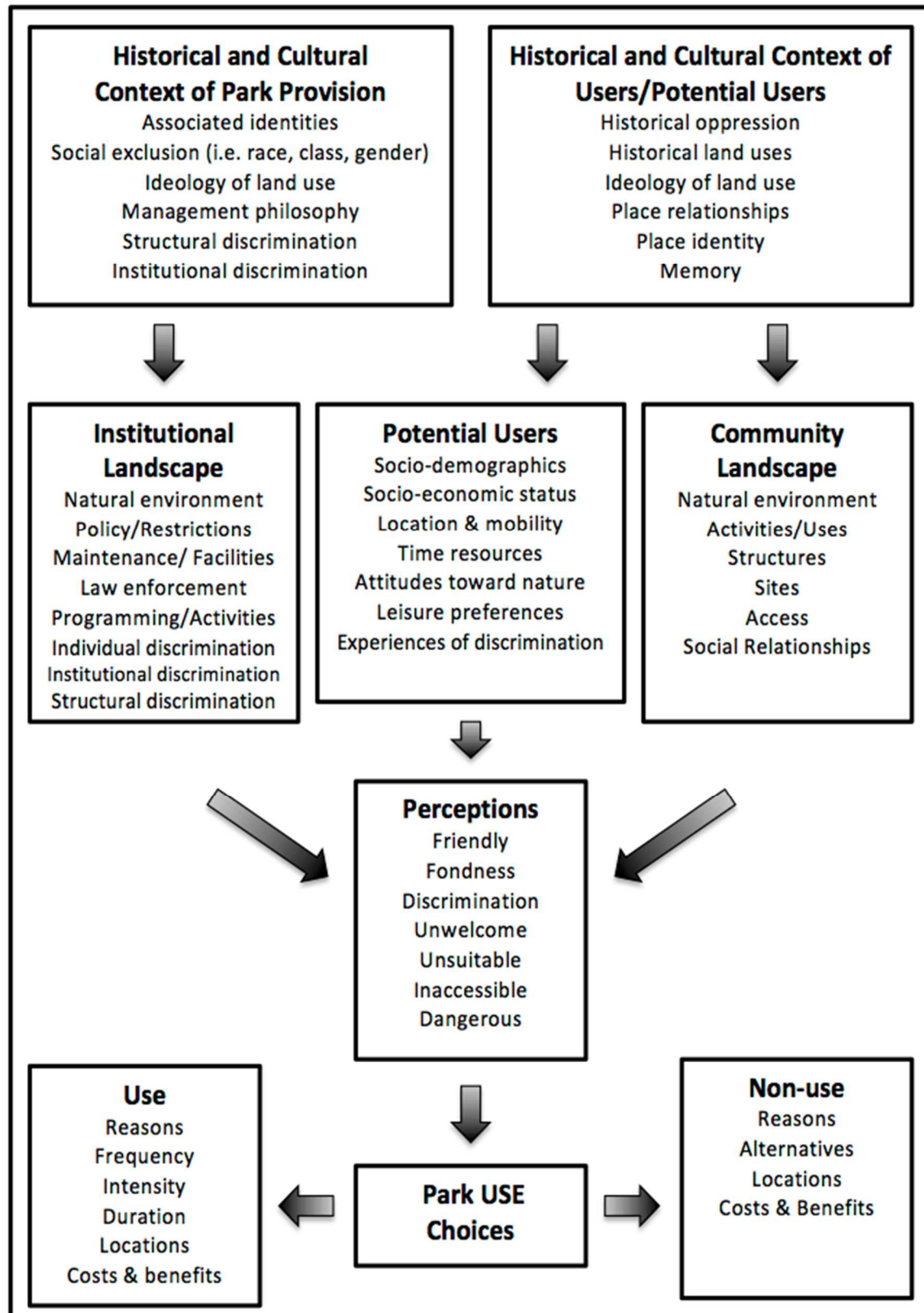


Figure 2.2 Framework for Park Use Choices Among Local African American Fishers

cultural context shapes their subjectivities. Additionally, I substituted the term “landscape” for “park space”. For this research, “landscape” is a more suitable term because it implies historical, social and cultural influences in the production of physical space. The latter half of the model resembles Byrne and Wolch’s framework connecting history, culture and users’ subjectivities to potential users’ perceptions of a park and thus, their choices for use.

This conceptual model allows a more in-depth examination of African American wildland relations and responds to Byrne and Wolch’s appeal to geographers to begin recognizing non-visitation and differential patterns of use in parks as functions of historical exclusion and cultural variation. By integrating *place* and *landscape* concepts into the framework, the flow of these factors throughout the equation and the influences of all actors become more salient. In addition to the goal of contributing to academic literature, the decision to use this framework was also based on its relevance to diverse audiences. Because it incorporates both theoretical and practical considerations, scholars, activists and professionals may find it useful.

This framework, derived from existing literature, informed the methodology used for this research. Qualitative methods were chosen to address relevant topics often not included in existing literature. As a result, they allowed an in-depth understanding of how history and place contributed to racially/ethnically specific ways of perceiving and engaging with the natural environment, how these relationships informed the construction and convergence of two cultural landscapes, racialization of park space and the repercussions for visitation.

Chapter two focuses on current literature examining African American non-visitation to wildland areas including national parks. These studies consistently find distinctive differences in the way African Americans and whites perceive and use park spaces. While African Americans prefer managed spaces and tend to use park spaces for socializing, whites are more likely to value wildland spaces with opportunities for solitary experiences. Theories explaining the reasons for African American non-visitation have both strengths and weaknesses. Byrne and Wolch's framework for Space, Race and Park Use lends insights non-captured by these theories. They suggest that the historical and cultural context of park development along with park space and personal characteristics shape potential users' perceptions of parks and their decisions on whether and how to use park spaces. My adaptation of their framework accounts for both parks' and potential users' historical and cultural contexts. It also enlists *place* and *landscape* concepts to highlight the significance of certain types of bounded spaces and historical influences in shaping certain types of identities, land uses, ideologies and identities – all of which shape perceptions of parks and choices for use. Current literature and this framework informed the methodology for this study which enabled me to gather the data necessary to contribute to our understanding of African American environmental relationships and reasons for non-visitation to national parks.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Methodological design for this study was guided by several factors: 1) research questions, 2) my conceptual understanding of the topic based on a review of current literature, 3) goals for contributing to current literature and 4) the need to ensure validity and reliability. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were combined to gain an understanding of history, place and perspectives among both local African American fishers and NPS officials.

Trustworthiness was accomplished through triangulation, self-reflection, journaling and peer discussions. These methods provided a multi-scalar, in-depth, rigorous examination of the impacts of wilderness management on local African Americans' traditional fishing practices at CNP, their interpretations of those impacts and how they fishers adjusted their recreation behaviors and visitation patterns.

Data Collection

Data for this study was gathered over a ten-month period between March 2014 and January 2015. I recruited twenty-five African American fisherwomen and fishermen of various ages using snowball sampling and less conventional methods such as approaching individuals while they fished or shopped for bait. Because perceptions of

the park could have led some fishers to seek alternative fishing sites, I sought the perspectives of fishers who currently fish at CNP, fished there in the past or never fished at the park. Twenty participants were residents of Lower Richland, one was a former resident who often returned to the area to fish with family and three resided in adjacent communities. I also used snowball sampling to identify four NPS employees (former and current CNP staff members) whose viewpoints could inform my understanding of CNP operations and discussion of recommendations. Table 3.1 shows type total number, age range and sex of participants.

Table 3. 1 Participant Information

Participants	Total	Ages	Men	Women
Current fishers	12	36-70	11	1
Past fishers	9	46-70	7	2
Never fished at CNP	4	53-69	4	0
NPS Employees	4	N/A	3	1

Each participant was assigned an identification number to anonymize personal information. Identification numbers and corresponding names were stored in a spreadsheet while contact and demographic information with respective identification numbers were saved on a different spreadsheet. Files were stored in separate locations on a password-protected computer.

Participant observation generally involved asking participants to teach me how to fish. On some days, I spent a few hours fishing with them while other days, we fished from late morning until sunset. In addition to teaching me about various fishing

techniques, they also coached me on cleaning and preparing fish for cooking. During my time with participants, I observed their interactions with companions, park staff, other park visitors and the physical environment. As we fished, they told me about local superstitions, recounted exchanges with other park visitors and personnel and described harrowing (and sometimes hilarious) encounters with wildlife. Because conversations were often intermittent and spontaneous, digitally recording them was either impossible, cumbersome or inappropriate. Therefore, I elected to record my observations along with fishers' stories and ruminations in a research journal.

Additionally, I spent time fishing alone at the park honing my skills, developing a sense of place and experiencing the feelings and encounters fishers often described during our conversations. I also attended board meetings of a local organization called South East Rural Community Outreach (SERCO) and events they co-hosted with CNP to better understand community issues, values and the nature of its relationship with CNP. I reflected on my experiences and noted emerging questions in my research journal. Participant observation afforded me a profound understanding of the meanings attached fishing, the community and CNP.

During semi-structured interviews, I inquired further about the meanings participants ascribed to fishing and the local community as well as their perceptions of park's physical environmental, staff, policies, programming and activities. I created three interview protocols for current fishers, past fishers and those who had never fished at CNP. Separate protocols were developed for each NPS employee based on their position, experience and interactions with fishers.

I employed triangulation (gathered data from multiple sources) to verify participants' claims and gain a better understanding of community history and park operations. In addition to local African American fishers and NPS/CNP employees, I also sought out various types of documents. They included federal legislation such as the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Organic Act of 1916 along with other public laws establishing park designations and enabling expansions. I also obtained CNP documents such as the *Superintendent's Compendium*, *Congaree Swamp National Monument Administrative History* and *General Management Plan*. Documents were analyzed according to theories and research findings discussed in literature, the conceptual framework developed for this study and emerging themes. Ultimately, they offered insight on how directives issued by the Wilderness Act were incorporated into policies and management practices at CNP.

Lastly, I interviewed four NPS employees – two former superintendents of CNP and two current staff members. The information they provided helped to verify and clarify participants' statements relating to their experiences at the park. Interviews also offered employees an opportunity to respond to fishers' claims, voice their perceptions of community engagement and express concerns about the impact of traditional fishing practices on natural resources at the park. Through our discussions I was able to corroborate some fishers' claims, assess barriers to engagement and discover possible avenues for increasing African American visitation.

Most interviews were recorded using a password protected digital recording device. In cases where participants requested that their interviews not be recorded,

notes were recorded in a research journal or typed directly into a Word document.

Lastly, I transcribed interviews and coded them using Dedoose data analysis software. Coding categories were created and organized according to theoretical approaches discussed in existing literature, the conceptual framework developed for this research and themes derived from data.

Through participant observation, semi-structured interview and document analysis I discovered complex historical and contemporary processes underlying meaning making, perceptions and park use choices of African American fishers. In particular, participant observation offered a greater understanding of the context from which participants' perceptions emerged. These methods also revealed the "greyness" of things. Very few matters could be construed as simply "black-and-white" (literally and metaphorically). Most demanded consideration for interaction, co-production, co-constitution, continuums, commonalities and contradictions.

Though the methods chosen for this study were invaluable in helping me obtain the data needed to answer my research questions, they were time consuming. As with many research projects, time restrains limit the amount of data that can be gathered. I would have liked to engage with more fishers or probe further into their environmental histories, traditional ecological knowledge and other common themes that often surfaced during our discussions including black landownership and hunting. However, the amount of time invested in recruiting, participant observation, interviews, transcribing and coding limited the number of fishers I could engage and topics I was able to address during interviews.

Positionality and Subjectivity

As a working class, African American woman who was raised in an urban area, I was both an insider and outsider to my participants. I believe my race and socioeconomic status helped participants feel comfortable expressing their views while my ignorance about rural lifestyles spurred a desire to teach me about fishing, community history and their way of life. However, my affiliation with academia caused some participants to believe I was able to access the park in ways they could not³. There were also a few instances where my gender created complications in communicating and interacting with male fishers. On at least one occasion, my positionality seemed to influence a participant's responses and level of engagement with me.

I also acknowledge that my social location informs how I view this research. As an African American who has experienced racial discrimination, I could relate to participants' views. To ensure trustworthiness, I monitored my subjectivities during participant observation and semi-structured interviews by maintaining awareness of how participants' statements and experiences affected my own attitudes. I frequently reflected on my subjectivities and used a research journal to think about ways of employing triangulation to avoid bias. I also discussed my research with peers to ensure that my interpretation of findings was consistent with data.

³ CNP accords researchers access to park resources normally unavailable to the general public. However, I wanted to experience CNP in ways similar to local African American fishers and not be perceived as an agent of the NPS. Therefore, I didn't request any special access to locations or supplies.

This methodology enabled me to obtain the data needed to answer my research questions and address current literature. It also encouraged reflexivity helping me to maintain self-awareness and ensure trustworthiness. Ultimately, it lent a fresh perspective on African American environmental relations and the causes for non-visitation to national parks.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

Historical conflicts and movements have played critical roles in constructing identities and values through discourses about social difference and nature (Moore, Pandian, & Kosek, 2003). The early environmental movement is no exception. Puritan, Romantic and Transcendentalist discourses were adopted and enacted by leaders of the early environmental movement in ways that ‘othered’ racial/ethnic minorities and working class groups. Synonymies such as wilderness/evil, rural/benign; wilderness/pure, city/dirty; wilderness/white, city/black; primitive/nonwhite, civilized/white were all used at one time or another to demarcate spaces belonging for elite whites and exclusion for others. In the following pages, I apply the conceptual framework developed for this study by examining the historical and cultural events and processes informing the establishment and management philosophy of CNP. I provide an analysis of Puritan, Romantic and Transcendentalist discourses to better understand how their biases were adopted by the environmental movement and ultimately codified in the Wilderness Act. I conclude by showing how this history informed the creation of CNP and its management philosophy.

This chapter identifies racial and class biases in discourses of the early environmental movement that ultimately were codified in wilderness legislation and

written into the landscape at CNP through wilderness management. In doing so, I demonstrate the importance of history and place in examining alienation and non-visitation to national parks among African Americans.

Racial and Class Bias in the Discursive Formation of the Environmental Movement

Puritanism

In *Wilderness and the American Mind* (2001), Nash describes Puritan views of wilderness. Most of these early American settlers were devout Protestant Christians whose perceptions of wilderness were largely shaped by biblical doctrine, a vision of civilization that favored agrarianism and cultural values espousing hard work and refinement. For Puritans, the Bible defined humans' relationship with wilderness. Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden and spent the remainder of their lives toiling in the wilderness. It was also where Moses and his people, abandoned by God, wandered for forty years and where Jesus was tempted by Satan. Furthermore, pioneers believed that happiness could only be attained by pleasing God and gaining entrance to heaven, not in seeking Earthly pleasures. These views combined with clashes with Native Americans in an unfamiliar land reinforced the notion that wilderness was a hostile, savage and barren place (Cronon, 1995). It symbolized human evil "where one was beyond the reach of redemption and where even a civilized man could revert to savagery if left too long" (Barton, 2002, p. 36).

If wilderness signified danger, waste and evil, then the pastoral held meanings of safety, progress and goodness. Thus, it did not take long for early pioneers to begin

subduing wilderness, transforming it into an agrarian landscape. For they were mandated by God to “improve” and dominate the land. It was written, “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth”. In listing his reasons for leaving England to settle the New World, John Winthrop argued,

The whole Earth is the Lord’s Garden and he hath given it to mankind with a general commission (Genius 1:28) to increase and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it which was again renewed to Noah. The end is double and natural, that Mankind might enjoy the fruits of the earth, and God might have His due Glory from His creatures. Why then should one strive here [England] for places of habitation, at such a cost as would obtain better land in another country, and at the same time suffer a whole continent as fruitful and convenient for the use of man to lie in waste without any improvement?
(Winthrop, 1869, p. 309)

Even for the non-religious, wilderness symbolized backwardness and barbarism. To tame and convert it into something useful was to signify progress and refinement. Those who dared to live on the frontier risked social exclusion. Therefore, one of the frontiers peoples’ primary objectives was to prove their worth by domesticating nature and making the land productive and habitable according to European standards.

Cultural ideals valorizing progress along with beliefs in Manifest Destiny provided the justification for westward expansion, clearing of massive tracts of forests and removal of Native Americans from coveted lands. For Puritans, natives personified the evil of wilderness and were often characterized as pagans and worshipers of Satan. In his poem, "God's Controversy with New England", poet and minister Michael Wigglesworth describes North America as a "waste and howling wilderness/ Where none inhabited/ But hellish fiends, and brutish men/ That the Devils worshiped (1997, p. 564). He then narrates how English settlers, ordained and empowered by God, subdued evil wilderness and the natives within thereby bringing light and goodness to the New World. He writes,

. . . The glorious Lord of hostes
Was pleasd to lead his armies forth
Into those forrein coastes.
At whose approach the darkness sad
Soon vanished away
And all the shadows of the night
Were turned to lightsome day.
The dark and dismal western woods
(The Devils den whilere)
Beheld such glorious Gospel-shine,
As none beheld more cleave.

Where sathan had his scepter sway'd
For many generations,
The King of Kings set up his throne
To rule amongst the nations. (1997, p. 565)

The Puritan era's environmental ethos – the heroic struggle to brave, conquer and exploit wilderness and the savages within – was essential to the formation of frontier mythology, a narrative that would appeal to white American and European intellectuals desiring adventure and respite from the bustle, pollution and gentility of the city.

Romanticism

Nash (2001) also discusses the rise of the Romantic Movement and its influence on early environmentalism. Throughout the colonial period and early nineteenth century, Puritan environmental values largely informed white Americans' relationship with wildlands. However, beneath the rampant exploitation were undercurrents of opposition. Far from the American frontier, urban European lawyers, doctors, scientists, writers and artists were forming the foundations of Romanticism, an intellectual movement which used deistic and primitivist philosophies to describe wild places.

Unlike Puritans' unfavorable view of wilderness, Romantic deism viewed pristine nature as the purest expression of God. As the movement in Europe became more popular, wilderness was gradually associated with beauty, goodness and divinity.

Primitivism reinforced these sentiments along with a few added caveats. For Romantics, too much time in the city was deleterious to man's physical and mental health. The urban life, with all of its luxuries made him too gentle. Every so often, he needed to get away and return to a simpler life where he could be rejuvenated and reclaim his manhood. These primitivist ideas were associated with many European men's fascination with the "Noble Savage", a man inhabiting the world's wild places or existing in earlier generations who lived a simple life. His daily struggle to survive in the wild made him strong, fearless and erotic. Though detestable, the "Noble Savage" was the personification of virility, a standard to which every man should strive for.

Romanticism's veneration of deism and primitivism made the thought of a new world with vast expanses of untamed forests inhabited by savages irresistible to its devotees. As early as 1791, Europeans crossed oceans to explore the American wilderness and by the mid-nineteenth century, the Romantic Movement had gained traction in America. These New World Romantics resembled their European counterparts in that many were elite urban intellectuals of the North who were far removed from pioneer life. They included writers and poets such as Walt Whitman and William Cullen Bryant and landscape artists like Thomas Cole and Winslow Homer. Many traversed the vast landscapes of the American West in search of adventure, inspiration and wild game.

Towards the mid nineteenth century, the Transcendentalist Movement was also well underway. Like Romanticism, it was an intellectual and artistic movement espousing the philosophy of divine nature with a proclivity toward primitivism.

However, transcendentalists placed emphasis on refinement and betterment through inner spirituality. Henry David Thoreau, one of the movement's most influential thinkers, believed in the half-cultivated man – a man who balanced toughness, vigor and courage with sensitivity, refinement and genteelness. He lauded the savage because he was “free and unconstrained in Nature, is her inhabitant and not her guest, and wears her easily and gracefully,” (1906, p. 253). But Thoreau also maligned Native Americans and others groups who visited the woods for consumptive uses. In *The Maine Woods*, he writes,

Other white men and Indians who come here are for the most part hirelings, paid so much a day for their labor, and as such they have no more love for wild nature than wood-sawyers have for forests. Other white men and Indians who come here are for the most part hunters, whose object is to slay as many moose and other wild animals as possible. But, pray, could not one spend some weeks or years in the solitude of this vast wilderness with other employments than these, -- employments perfectly sweet and innocent and ennobling? For one that comes with a pencil to sketch or sing, a thousand come with an axe or rifle. What a coarse and imperfect use Indians and hunters make of Nature! No wonder that their race is so soon exterminated. (2009, p. 66)

One of the early environmental movement's most prominent activists, John Muir, was inspired by the writings of Thoreau and held similar views toward Native

Americans. He marveled at their ability to live lightly on the land. In 1868, while traveling through Yosemite Valley he wrote,

How many centuries Indians have roamed these woods nobody knows, probably a great many, extending far beyond the time that Columbus touched our shores, and it seems strange that heavier marks have not been made. Indians walk softly and hurt the landscape hardly more than the birds and squirrels, and their brush and bark huts last hardly longer than those of wood rats, while their more enduring monuments, excepting those wrought on the forests by the fires they made to improve their hunting grounds, vanish in a few centuries.

On the other hand, he likened them to filthy animals that sullied the pristine landscape. The same year, he was visited by a group of Native Americans from Mono whom he found repulsive. He wrote, "A strangely dirty and irregular life these dark-eyed, dark haired half-happy savages lead in this clean wilderness" (1917, p. 206).

Both men's statements show ambivalence towards Native Americans. They idolized their "primitiveness" yet, Thoreau decried them for the very practices that engendered such admirable qualities while Muir believed they detracted from the purity of wilderness.

The two men diverged in their sentiments towards African Americans. In *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau expressed fervent opposition to slavery and implored

Massachusetts' white citizens to join the abolitionist movement (2008). He also accused its businessmen and politicians of avarice and callousness in their handling of civil rights. Muir, who was less concerned with the politics of slavery viewed blacks as cheerful, rambunctious and lazy. He wrote, "the Negroes are easy-going and merry, making a great deal of noise and doing little work. One energetic white man, working with a will, would easily pick as much cotton as half a dozen Sambos and Sallies" (1916, p. 51).

Though Thoreau and Muir admired Native Americans, both envisioned a wilderness without them. Neither considered the intimate relationship with wildlands African Americans developed through agriculture, maroonage, hunting, fishing, spiritual practices and medicinal knowledge (Blum, 2002; Diouf, 2014; Glave & Stoll, 2006; Holloway, 1991; Schweninger, 2002) and how these practices could be linked to environmental protection.

In addition to whiteness, early (and contemporary) environmentalism is also linked to elitist beliefs that wilderness exists solely for leisure and intellectual stimulation, a standard unattainable for working class groups and those who work in wildlands. In their discussion of race and class in wilderness discourse, Deluca and Demo (2008) analyze John Muir's statements petitioning for the protection of Yosemite Valley. He proposes to "reserve [it] out of the public domain for the use and recreation of the people" (Muir, 1890). He later defines "the people" as tourists, botanists, geologists, or the lovers of wilderness – people whose activities would align to those outlined in Wilderness Act. Deluca and Demo point out how use of the phrase, "the people" conceals whom the park would really be preserved for. Recognizing the users of the

wilderness Muir envisions as primarily white and wealthy, the authors assert, “Who counts as “people” and what counts as “use and recreation” is determined by the prerequisites of white wilderness” (p. 205).

Romantic and Transcendentalist discourses linking nature, divinity and nationalism transformed many Americans’ sentiments toward nature from disdain to veneration. But they also held the racial and class biases of the time. Members of these movements such as Henry David Thoreau and Thomas Cole advocated for the protection of the environment and inspired politically influential environmentalists such as John Muir, Founder of the Sierra Club; landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead; conservationist, Aldo Leopold; naturalist, writer and critic, Joseph Wood Krutch; and Howard Zahniser, author of the Wilderness Act. Through these connections, their prejudices informed the foundational tenets of the environmental movement and wilderness legislation.

Early Twentieth Century Environmentalism

As more white Americans ventured into the wilderness areas of American West in search of adventure and wild game, they grew concerned about how rapid settlement was contributing to forest degradation and the decline of game stocks. Discourses formed around wildlife conservation, habitat restoration and wilderness preservation (D. Taylor, 2002). Leading environmentalists such as George Catlin, David Henry Thoreau, Fredrick Law Olmsted and John Muir advocated for the protection of America's wild places through the preservation of massive tracts of land in the West and North.

The creation of Yellowstone in 1872 and removal of the Native Americans therein, began a long procession of preservation projects to save American wilderness.

Between 1900 and 1914 numerous advocacy groups formed and were fueled by President Roosevelt's deep concern for how the destruction of the natural environment weakened American nationalism and world dominance. In the 1909 "Opening Address by the President" at *Proceedings of the Conference of Governors in the White House*, Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed,

Nature has supplied to us in the United States, and still supplies to us, more kinds of resources in a more lavish degree than has ever been the case at any other time or with any other people. Our position in the world has been attained by the extent and thoroughness of the control we have achieved over nature; but we are more and not less, dependent upon what she furnishes than at any previous time of history since the days of primitive man. . . . The wise use of our natural resources, which are our national resources as well, is the great material question of today. I have asked you to come together now because the enormous consumption of these resources, and the threat of imminent exhaustion of some of them, due to reckless and wasteful use, . . . calls for common effort, common action. (Roosevelt, 1908)

However, Roosevelt's support of conservation did not extend to racial equality. Fearing "race suicide" and the end of world dominance, he urged white women to fulfill

their reproductive roles and have larger families. Those neglecting these duties were deemed “criminals against the race” (Dyer, 1992; Limerick, 2002). Roosevelt remained silent when African Americans appealed to him to speak out against lynching and other forms of racial violence and discrimination (Pauley, 2001). And his view of Native Americans is appalling. In a speech delivered in 1886 he opines,

I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indian is the dead Indian, but I believe nine out of every ten are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth. The most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian⁴. (Hagedorn, 1921, p. 355)

Through his words and silence, Roosevelt expressed sentiments about race that favored whites. His actions show how environmental protection and racial equality were understood as separate issues.

Between 1910 and 1950 more prominent environmentalists including Aldo Leopold, Arthur Carhart, Bob Marshall began advocating for federal protection of wilderness. In 1936, a number of influential conservationists including Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall and Olaus Murie founded The Wilderness Society, an advocacy group designed to work with Congress to push for wilderness conservation.

⁴ Hagedorn’s *Roosevelt in the Badlands* appears to be the earliest source where this speech appears. Parts of this speech are also used in Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 86; Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 140 and other scholarly works.

Around 1945, ardent conservationist and former government employee, Howard Zahniser became executive secretary of The Wilderness Society. From 1945 until his death in 1964, he led their campaign to establish federally administered wilderness areas, which entailed authoring the Wilderness Act (Turner, 2012). His perception of wilderness incorporated Romantic and Transcendentalist thought. He wrote,

I believe that at least in the present phase of our civilization we have a profound, a fundamental need for areas of wilderness—a need that is not only recreational and spiritual but also educational and scientific, and withal essential to a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, and our place in all nature. This need is for areas of the earth within which we stand without our mechanisms that make us immediate masters over our environment—areas of wild nature in which we sense ourselves to be, what in fact I believe we are, dependent members of an interdependent community of living creatures that together derive their existence from the sun. By very definition this wilderness is a need. The idea of wilderness as an area without man's influence is man's own concept. Its values are human values. Its preservation is a purpose that arises out of man's own sense of his fundamental needs (Zahniser, 1956).

Like the elite white supporters of the early environmental movement, Zahniser's conception of wilderness favors a dichotomous view of the human-nature relationship

and privileges leisure, intellectual pursuits and self-reflection. His statement is almost a reiteration of the Wilderness Act. For the statute states,

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value (US Congress, 1964).

As federal law, The Wilderness Act imposes the interests, values and prejudices of a small group upon a diverse nation. Resultantly, those who cannot afford to participate in such activities or value consumptive uses of natural resources are restricted or banned from enjoying the benefits of wilderness.

Though the history of the early environmental movement cited above is brief, it shows how whiteness and elitism associated with Puritan, Transcendentalists and Romantic discourses became embedded in the discourse of the environmental movement and ultimately transferred into the Wilderness Act. Through this analysis, we can better understand how wilderness management at CNP can operate in ways that favor activities associated with white elite and middle class visitors while limiting those valued by racial/ethnic minorities and the less wealthy.

Wilderness Comes To Lower Richland

CNP is located southeast Richland County (locally known as Lower Richland), South Carolina, a rural, predominantly African American community about twenty miles from the state's capitol, Columbia. Park officials describe it as an old growth bottomland hardwood forest. Adjacent to the Congaree and Wateree Rivers, this floodplain ecosystem is the largest unfragmented tract (26,545 acres) of its kind in the Southeastern U.S. Its high biodiversity makes it home to several state and national champion trees (trees considered the largest of their respective species) and has earned it several designations including an International Biosphere Reserve and Globally Important Bird Area (National Park Service, 2014a).

But before the area gained these distinctions, it was very different place. What is now CNP was once where Native Americans, known as the Congaree, fished, hunted, buried their dead and erected mounds. It was also here that slaves built dikes to protect crops on the Congaree riverbank, herded livestock, constructed mounds for cattle to

wait out periodic flooding and established maroon communities (Cely, 1975; Lockhart, 2006; National Park Service, 2014b).

In 1898, the Santee River Cypress Logging Company, owned by Francis Beidler, acquired a large parcel of the floodplain and began harvesting its mammoth cypress trees. The industry employed African American men who were often required to perform the most dangerous tasks (Newman, 2000). Eventually, hot humid weather, malaria, lack of dependable roads, frequent flooding and labor intensive methods made logging inefficient and unprofitable. In 1915, logging was halted. Beidler, however, refused to sell the property and placed it in “timber reserve” status believing its hardwoods would someday become valuable. Upon his death, he willed the property to his family who allowed the land to mature. During the 1960s, high timber prices and encouragement by foresters prompted the Beidler heirs to resume logging (Janiskee, 2008).

In opposition, local environmentalists formed the Congaree Swamp National Preserve Association to lobby for preservation of the Beidler Tract. Some proponents sought support by portraying the property as an outstanding example of pristine, virgin forest (Almlie, 2010). Opponents from the timber industry, Cedar Creek Hunt Club and local private landowners campaigned to refute these claims contending that logging had been an ongoing operation within and around the Beidler tract for many decades. Despite their efforts, the activists succeeded. On October 18, 1976, Congress established Congaree Swamp National Monument (CSNM) and began a land acquisition process resulting a purchase of 15,138 acres (Rametta, 1991).

In the 1980s, local environmentalists pushed for expansion and more federal protection of the park. In 1988, Public Law 100-524 or the Congaree Swamp National Monument Expansion and Wilderness Act, appropriated \$3 million for land acquisition and mandated that the property be managed as designated wilderness (Rametta, 1991; U.S. Congress, 1988). As specified in the Wilderness Act, designated wilderness areas are managed to preserve the untrammeled, natural and undeveloped qualities of wildland areas and provide opportunities for solitude and “primitive” types of recreation (US Congress, 1964). At CNP wilderness management was to become central in the shaping its institutional landscape comprised of policies, physical characteristics and uses that reflect sensibilities of the elite white leaders of the early environmental movement. Though activists considered the legislation a win for environmental protection, many local residents viewed it as a threat to their way of life.

Opposition by the Local African American Community

Over the years of debate on park formation and expansion, the arguments of multiple stakeholders were documented and considered by decision makers at the state and federal levels, yet the perspectives of the surrounding African American community are largely missing from written record (Almlie, 2010). It was not until 2003 during the U.S. congressional hearing on expanding the park that Hattie Fruster, then President of the local NAACP chapter, spoke on behalf of the African Americans of Lower Richland (2003). In her prepared statement, she cited the ways in which legal proceedings regarding the park were not made known to the local community. She also highlighted

how expansion and national park status would add to ongoing threats to property rights and black landownership in the area and accused The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Club of insensitivity toward the concerns of the community. Despite her arguments, expansion was granted and Congaree Swamp National Monument became Congaree National Park.

Today, the park encompasses 26,545 acres, 21,700 of which are designated wilderness. Though hunting and foraging are now banned, fishing is still allowed, yet on a limited basis due to restrictions imposed by the Wilderness Act.

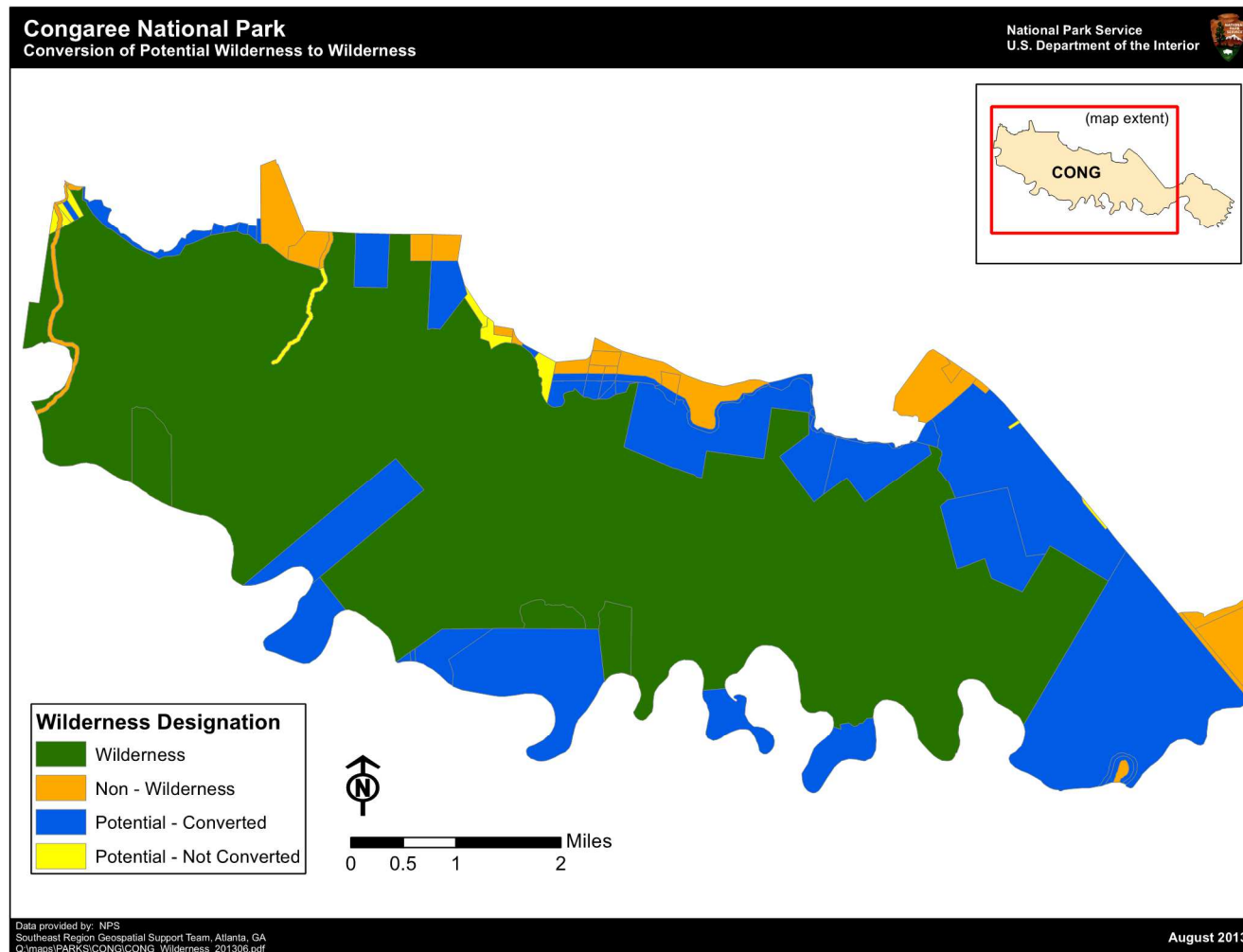


Figure 4.2 Wilderness Designation at CNP
(Southeast Region Geospatial Support Team, 2013)

Chapter four examines the discourses informing the early environmental movement to reveal how the racial and class biases of its supporters became embedded in the Wilderness Act. As a federal statute which outlines the philosophy and precepts for wilderness management in national parks like CNP, it channels history into the present creating an institutional landscape of policies, practices and physical features consistent with the environmentalists' idolization of the unworked, uninhabited wilderness and interests in protection, leisure, scenic viewing and education.

These values did not align with those of African American community members who may have been excluded from debates regarding the creation and expansion of the park. In the end, more powerful interests prevailed resulting in an institutional landscape which displaced local fishers' community landscape.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FISHERS

In contrast to views of the West held by leaders of the early environmental movement, the agrarian South was generally characterized by the plantation and symbolized a different form of “the natural” that did not erase humans from the landscape (Stewart, 2005). Historians describe how slaves’ African heritage and living conditions shaped rich and varied environmental relationships that persisted long after Emancipation. The environmental ethos of African American fishers of Lower Richland exhibit elements of the environmental relationships discussed in these literatures. In particular, the survival and social bonding of kin and community were intimately intertwined with the wild landscapes, much like their forebears.

In this chapter, I create a portrait of African Americans’ environmental history and connect it to local African Americans fishers’ place history and current fishing practices. Using existing literature, interviews and conversations with fishers and insights I gained during our interactions, I show how historical conditions and events along with place processes informed the construction of a community landscape in Lower Richland where subsistence activities provided sustenance and reinforced social bonds. This account presents a perspective on African American environmental relations different from normative approaches which largely focus on fear of wildlands expressed by

African Americans residing in urban areas outside the southeastern U.S. It also emphasizes the importance of history and place in shaping environmental relationships and reveals why these interactions differ between local African American fishers and proponents of the Wilderness Act. With its focus on history, place, identity, land use and relationships, this chapter represents the component of the framework developed for this research relating to the historical and cultural context of users and potential users.

Environmental History of African Americans

Slavery

Slaves' views of nature were derived from African concept of “good use” where land linked Africans to past, present and future (Blum, 2002). Ceremonies and rituals conducted at special times and places along with traditional customs helped them maintain bonds with family, community and land. Many of these rituals were performed to nourish ancestral spirits and preserve their connections to family and community. In return, the ancestors promised to ensure their health and well-being. Upon capture many African women were seen swallowing soil before being forced aboard slave ships. Once on the other side of the Atlantic, “good use” continued to shape Africans' and eventually African Americans' relationships with land, even in the hostile conditions of their new home (Millner, 1995).

Here we can already see how different worldviews between African Americans and white Americans form the roots of disparate and even conflicting views of nature. While both Africans and Puritan settlers held utilitarian views of wilderness, they were

distinguished, in part, by how very differing spiritual beliefs which shaped differing views of race, environmental values and relationships with wilderness.

When Africans began to arrive in America during the 1600s, most white Americans viewed wilderness as evil, primitive, hostile wastelands to be tamed and controlled (Nash, 2001). These descriptions were extended to Africans who were considered cursed, bestial and uncivilized and therefore deserving of brutal subjugation (Fanon, 1968). Outka explains, “It was not simply the treatment of black people as if they were part of nature that underpinned slavery, in other words, but in making black people coextensive with a nature that existed solely to be exploited and “improved” by whites” (2008, p. 53). Once on the shores of America, Africans were looked upon as little more than domesticated animals. Solomon Northrup, a free-born African American who was kidnapped and sold into slavery writes of his master:

“He looked upon the black man simply as an animal, differing in no respect from any other animal, save in the gift of speech and the possession of somewhat higher instincts, and, therefore, the more valuable. To work like his father's mules – to be whipped and kicked and scourged through life – to address the white man with hat in hand, and eyes bent servilely on the earth, in his mind was the natural and proper destiny of a slave. Brought up with such ideas – in the notion that we stand without the pale of humanity – no wonder the oppression of my people are a pitiless and unrelenting race”. (1855, p. 261)

Africans, on the other hand, held a favorable view of nature. For many, the wilderness or “the bush” was a sacred place symbolizing escape or transformation (Blum, 2002). Rites of passage ceremonies marking significant events in the lives of Africans were performed in wild places. Many of these rituals were brought to the Americas where they merged with Christianity to create syncretic spiritual systems. For example, among the Gullah and Geechee people of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, those who desired to join a church were first required to go into the wilderness to pray and meditate in solitude (Holloway, 1991).

Slaves developed intimate relationships with wildlands through agriculture. Plantations often bordered wildlands where slaves tended crops, cared for livestock, hunted, fished and foraged (Stewart, 2005). In the forests of what is now CNP slaves cultivated indigo, herded cattle and hogs and built mounds that provided refuge for cattle during flooding events (Cely, 1975; Lockhart, 2006).

Slave men often hunted and fished to feed masters' families. Since fishing did not require guns and could be conducted during the day, masters preferred to allow slaves to fish rather than hunt (Glave & Stoll, 2006). Slave men also accompanied their masters on elite hunting trips. Much of the work they performed was drudgery such as saddling horses, tending to dogs and clearing brush. Sometimes, they were instructed to retrieve game for amusement (Glave & Stoll, 2006). By equating the duty of male slaves to that of hunting dogs, masters reproduced the belief in African American bestiality, reinforcing and justifying their subordinated position.

Slaves also hunted and fished to supplement their families' diets since food given to them from masters' houses often lacked protein (Glave & Stoll, 2006). Hunting and fishing were sometimes family affairs. Because most slaves did not possess firearms, hunting required skill and cleverness. Possums, raccoons and rabbits were most commonly hunted and prepared in authentic ways. The sharing of these meals within slave communities helped form the foundations of southern African American cuisine. However, not all slaves were permitted to leave their plantations and therefore, many engaged in these activities surreptitiously. For them, wildlands were places of both sustenance and fraught with many threats.

In addition to danger, wilderness was also a place of escape, refuge, and healing for the enslaved helping them negotiate power amongst themselves and with masters' families. For instance, some slaves would runaway into the woods and return after a few days as a form of resistance (Blum, 2002). But ultimately stories of dangers in the woods caused many slaves to fear them. While some were tales of malicious people, animals, spirits and beasts, others were true accounts of slaves who had runaway only to succumb to the attack of a wild animal or suffer the consequences of capture. Masters, mistresses, overseers and slaves told other slaves, especially slave children, these tales and accounts to discourage escape (Blum, 2002). Wildland areas also concealed innumerable rapes, beatings and lynchings, reinforcing fear of the woods.

Slaves' intimate knowledge of medicinal plants endowed them with power and status among fellow slaves and whites (Blum, 2002). Doctors were scarce in the rural South therefore, communities relied on the expertise of slaves with knowledge of

medicinal plants to maintain the health of their families. Many times, these were older women who often tended to the needs of slave and white families across entire regions. These abilities exalted their position and endowed them with power and respect in both societies since they were equally familiar with poisons and were able control reproduction through their knowledge of abortifacients (herbs that induce miscarriage). Furthermore, they held the right to choose successors, passing their knowledge, skills and power to the next generation.

Slavery produced experiences of the natural environment that were very different from those of whites. Living conditions required that they become knowledgeable about the natural environment through labor. Their favorable view of wild nature helped them acquire power in a seemingly helpless situation. In doing so, they attributed meanings to wildlands that enabled them to survive and nourish social relationships.

Maroonage

The maroons were African Americans who escaped slavery to hide and live in the wild. Diouf (2014) distinguishes maroons from runaways and free blacks. She explains that while runaways and free blacks sought to join and brave the oppressive laws and norms of white society, maroons preferred the freedom and independence that living in the woods afforded them. She writes, "Autonomy was at the heart of their project and exile the means to realize it. The need for foolproof concealment, the exploitation of their natural environment, and their stealth raids on farms and plantations were at the

very core of their lives. Secrecy and the particular ecology of their refuges forced them to devise ways to occupy the land and to hide within it” (2014, p. 2). Newly arrived African slaves or “new negroes” were more likely to engage in maroonage than American-born slaves. Historian, John Spencer Bassett wrote of the enslaved Africans, “Used to the forest life in Africa and accustomed to much severity on the farms of the frontier planters, it was no great hardship to them to live for months or years in camp in the swamps” (1901, p. 32).

Materials and provisions needed to survive in the woods such as food and ammunition were obtained through hunting, fishing, foraging, raiding plantations and trading with slaves (Schweninger, 2002). These skills enabled maroons to build communities in the deep woods where many hid for years. The forests of the Congaree River (within what is now CNP) supported at least one maroon community.

Land and Labor

Emancipation brought opportunities for African Americans to become landowners. Most blacks believed that landownership was the key to economic advancement (Starkey, 2005). During the Civil War and postbellum, the Union government attempted to enact a series of land redistribution measures. During the war, two Confiscation Acts were passed to seize and redistribute lands owned by Southern rebels. The Southern Homestead Act made public lands available to small farmers – both black and white – while General Sherman's Field Order No. 15 accorded forty acres to every freedman living on South Carolina's islands and coasts.

Unfortunately, failure of the Union government to fully implement redistribution measures combined with resistance from southern white planters caused these efforts to stall. As a result, black labor continued to be exploited through the implementation of Black Codes. These laws restricted blacks' movements and forced them to work for whites whose meager pay and unfair practices ensnared them in debt. Many men found themselves working as sharecroppers and tenant farmers while others toiled inhumane in logging and turpentine camps (C. Y. Johnson & Bowker, 2004; Starkey, 2005; D. Taylor, 2002). The combination of unfair labor and Jim Crow laws restricted African Americans' physical, economic and social mobility resulting in impoverished African American communities across the South.

In Lower Richland, freed women and men were able to realize the dream of landownership through a Reconstruction land redistribution program developed by the South Carolina legislature (Almlie et al., 2009). Landownership afforded community members a level of autonomy as they established farms, small industries, schools and churches. African American men were laborers during logging operations on the Beidler Tract which is now part of CNP. This was treacherous work as they often required to perform the most dangerous tasks. Hot, humid weather and malaria posed additional threats (Newman, 2000).

In many ways, historians' descriptions of slaves' and freed people's environmental relationships have resonance with those of African American fishers in Lower Richland. Subsistence practices along with landownership fostered the creation of a community landscape in Lower Richland which helped families meet their needs

and form strong social relationships. These historical and place processes are central in helping us understand the context from which fishers' perceptions of CNP emerged.

History in Place

It was a perfect September morning as I drove down Old Bluff Rd. With my car windows rolled down, I reveled in the sunshine and cool breeze. I always enjoy driving through this rural community just twenty-five minutes from the bustling streets of downtown Columbia, South Carolina. The old homes, churches, plantations of Lower Richland dot the landscape. And as I discovered during my research, many of the families who owned and occupied them throughout the twentieth century continue to do so.

When the Civil War ended, Reconstruction efforts offered freed women and men the promise of landownership. However, their hopes were shattered when most Reconstruction initiatives eventually buckled due to poor implementation and resistance from Southern whites. Despite its general failure, there were some successes in South Carolina.

In southeast Richland County, also known as Lower Richland, 39 freed women and men purchased and received clear title to 1,399 acres of land from the South Carolina Land Commission (Almlie et al., 2009). Many started small farms which helped them achieve some economic stability. Landownership also reinforced kinship bonds and enabled them to build communities with schools, churches and small industries.

They also maintained an intimate relationship with the natural environment through hunting, fishing, foraging and spiritual practices.

Throughout the years, lands acquired through Reconstruction efforts have been passed on to successive generations. Though much of the land has been sold, at least 10 families still own relatively intact parcels that can be traced to purchases from the South Carolina Land Commission (Almlie et al., 2009). Today, 72% of residents in Lower Richland own land despite a high level of poverty (Copeland, 2008).



Figure 5.1 Harriet Barber House, Lower Richland, SC, late 1940s

Naomi Daniels Jackson holds Johnny Barber's daughter. The young boy is Sandy Hagood. The original structure was a two-room cabin built in 1870 on land purchased from the South Carolina Land Commission by former slave, Samuel Barber. The Barber family still owns the property today. With the help of local and state government officials, The Harriet Barber House was restored and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Almlie et al., 2009; "South East Rural Community Outreach," 2014).

‘Outdoors People’

Along Old Bluff Road is a patchwork of contemporary and historical structures. Homes and churches stand amidst stands of oaks, gums, pines, hickories and other trees characteristic of bottomland forests. This is also the road which leads to the main entrance of CNP. On this day, I stop by Mary’s house, just down the street from the park entrance. Mary grew up in Lower Richland. So did her progenitors who were among the freed women and men to purchase land from South Carolina Land Commission during Reconstruction. As a descendant, she inherited property, love for the outdoors and a passion for fishing. Today, Mary and a relative who I’ll call Jean, volunteered to give me a tour of sites they once fished at CNP.

Once I was parked and out of the car, Mary greeted me with a big hug and wasted no time showing me around her property where she had built a large, beautiful home. Her front lawn was picture perfect with neatly maintained ornamental flowers, shrubs and trees. The backyard was a social paradise. Wooden benches, chairs and tables were positioned beneath large flowering trees with potted plants hanging from their limbs. Eclectic sculptures fashioned from tree snags were placed around the lawn offering an artistic flare.

As we walked further into the backyard, the communal area gave way to a vegetable garden and a stand of fruit trees. Mary tended to her plants as she talked animatedly about her love of “digging in the Earth”.

Mary was in many ways, typical of long-term residents in Lower Richland whose place relationships were deeply intertwined with the natural landscape. In fact, I was corrected a few times for describing participants as ‘fishers’. The first time this happened was during a preliminary interview with a participant. I began our conversation by explaining my interest in understanding local fishers’ experiences at CNP. “Well, we fish,” he responded, “but we are what you call ‘outdoors people’” (N2, 2014).

This participant presented a perspective of African American environmental relations often neglected in the literature. Unknowingly, he challenged the popular notion that African Americans fear wildlands and advanced my argument that subgroup differences should be considered when studying the environmental relationships and park visitation patterns of racial/ethnic groups.

His words also exposed a limitation of my research. I realized that in examining the activity of fishing, I might only be scratching the surface of a kaleidoscopic outdoor heritage. Yes, they were fishers but also hunters, farmers, gardeners, artists and recreationists. These identities are steeped in historical and place processes, many of which are linked to the property that is now CNP or what community members call, “the swamp” or “the monument”.

A Necessary Place. A Social Place.

In an oral history interview conducted at the request of the NPS by Middle Tennessee State University Professor Jim Williams, former African American park

employee William Moore described his experiences growing up in Hopkins (a small town in Lower Richland and physical address of CNP) during the Great Depression.

Basically our life here, you know, except our excursion into the Cedar Creek⁵ – hunt and fish. We, at that time, we trapped and it wasn't really anybody say anything about trapping animals and fish down there, so we did a lot of trapping. And that was our food source. . . . We'd set out fish baskets. We – coons and even, back then, we would even trap possum and eat them. Something I would [*sic*] touch today, but back then we did. And I'd shoot squirrel. (Moore quoted in Williams, 2010, p. 2)

When asked about his earliest memories of fishing, his words exude excitement and fondness.

Oh, those were the good days! They were a good part, part of the good days. I enjoyed going into the creek and fish. Catch the fish. A lot of them we would cook right on the creek bank, and the rest of them and the whole family would eat. . . . Most of them brims, catfish, or eel. (2010, p. 8)

Moore's words were echoed by many of the fishers I interviewed in several ways. While fishing was a recreational activity for the fishers I interviewed, they were all

⁵ Cedar Creek is a popular fishing site for community members. While it runs through private lands in some areas, it is accessible to the public at CNP. It enters the park at its northwest boundary and meets the Congaree River in an area where the river functions as the park's southeastern boundary.

raised in families whose livelihoods depended, partially or wholly, on fishing, hunting and foraging in the swamp. One fisher stated, “Either you worked in a factory or you worked on Fort Jackson⁶ or you did day labor and it was few and far between. So to make ends meet the people hunted and fished to make up that portion” (C4, 2014).

Another participant reflected on his childhood experiences fishing in the swamp. “For me, when I was doing it back then, I grew up doing it, it was for the food and it was for just the enjoyment of it” (P1, 2014). An elder participant spoke of foraging in the swamp when it was still owned by the Beidler family. “. . . me and my grand uncle used to go down there with a mule and wagon cutting mulberry to sell to and make a living. It used to be called Santee, that’s the name of the swamp where the park is at, they called it Santee” (P3, 2014).

Another commonality between participants’ and Moore’s accounts was the vital role the swamp played in helping community members foster social relationships. Most participants learned how to fish by accompanying other family members on fishing trips. Many spoke of what I call “fishing events” where every stage of the fishing process was performed with others. On these occasions, families and friends would gather early in the morning, hike, bike or drive to a favorite fishing hole, dig for bait and spend the day catching, cleaning, cooking and eating fish.

During a presentation at CNP, Lower Richland resident, Jimmy Dinkins recounted his childhood adventures in the swamp. “We would catch brims and stuff, and we would cook, and play for a while, and go back and catch more fish, and eat, and stuff like that.

⁶ Fort Jackson is an Army base located in Columbia about 23 miles from CNP.

And so, it was, so you know, it was like our playground” (2009, p. 2). He also spoke of camping with friends in the swamp and being baptized in Cedar Creek.

These historical social relations were not exclusive to African Americans in the community. All participants described harmonious relationships with the white residents of Lower Richland in contrast to how they viewed other areas.

Everybody was mostly a family back in the days whether they were white or not and that's what we shared with a lot of African American people that never lived in this area. Of course there were people back in the day . . . in the area we lived most of the people who lived there were friendly. My great grandfather . . . was like a veterinarian and grandpa used to go and work on the mules and the cows and all types of animals and it was mostly the white families that he did this for. So back in the days, they were much friendly. Back in the day, they would call them Uncle and Aunt Cary and all that. It was different. My grandpa had a lot of white friends. They would fish in the Cedar Creek area and along that river . . . and spend the weekend fishing (P2, 2014).

Francis Dawson, a white resident, was well known for showing generosity to local fishers. Before CNP was established, he owned a cabin and land on Cedar Creek. Not only did he allow locals to park their vehicles and fish on his property, he supplied benches, tables and bait to make their experience more pleasant. Eventually, his

property was sold to the park and access was restricted. However, the fishers I interviewed remember him well and continue to refer to the area as 'Francis'⁷.

Dawson's example shows how amiable relations and private landownership were central to the creation and maintenance of a community landscape. Though a few landowners forbade trespassing, most did not mind if fishers crossed or fished on their property. In the area that is now CNP, legacy roads and trails built by loggers and hunters also made for easy access to fish holes. This fluid landscape facilitated the survival and bonding of community members.

Community access to private lands within the swamps of Lower Richland was characteristic of customs involving property rights in the South after the Civil War. Stewart (2005) explains that laws governing the use of private property were mediated by long-held traditions that treated un-gated wildlands as commons. These areas offered poor blacks and whites spaces to fish, hunt and range livestock. In Lower Richland, commons provided sites where environmental and social relationships could flourish leading to the emergence of a community landscape.

A Place Maintained

Though access to community fishing holes has been drastically reduced due to restrictions imposed by management at CNP, increasing privatization and local hunt clubs, fishing remains a social activity for most participants. For instance, if fishers catch more than their families can eat, they will sometimes hold an impromptu fish fry,

⁷ Park officials know this area as Dawson's Cabin.

inviting friends and family to their residence for an evening of eating, drinking and socializing. One fisher who goes on weekly fishing excursions with his brother holds fish frys several times a month.

Like on Mondays. He's [brother] off on Mondays. We'll go every Monday. Yeah. That's my hobby. I don't do it for me to eat. I do it for – I come home, I clean 'em, I cook 'em and I feed'em. And there's no charge. Ain't like the government. I'm feeding you these fish, ya'll give me five dollars. No. I cook 'em and we eat 'em and that's it. Let's say I went fishing today and I caught about twenty-five, thirty fish. I would come home and clean them myself and call my friends and say, "hey man, I got some fish, let's have a fish fry". And all of them eat it all. Ain't nothing left. (C2, 2014)

Some fishers will freeze their catch and store it for months before finally orchestrating a much larger fish fry with a smorgasbord of other meats, side items and desserts. I was a guest at an annual fish fry where the fishers' friends and family journeyed from near and far to attend. An estimated two hundred guests participated in games, dancing, eating, drinking and mingling throughout the day.

Fish were also used for gift giving. While fishing, participants kept loved ones in mind. One fisher saved all the jackfish he caught for his father who enjoyed eating them. Another often gave his surplus of fish to elderly friends who were poverty stricken or

unable to fish. And because I was a novice fisher, participants always demanded that I accept some, if not all of their catch.

Many of the fish shared by local fishers were not caught at CNP but obtained from other lakes, rivers and creeks outside Lower Richland. Restrictions on fishing imposed by CNP/NPS policies, hunt clubs and privatization in Lower Richland prompted many of the fishers I interviewed to find more accessible fishing sites often much further away. However, the continuation of these social practices demonstrates that this particular aspect of traditional fishing is not dependent on one particular setting.

The African Americans of Lower Richland, South Carolina present a remarkable example of how history and place processes became interwoven, producing geographically and ethnically distinctive ways of engaging with the natural environment. Amiable social relationships combined with private landownership allowed freed women and men to settle in Lower Richland and build a community landscape which offered extensive access to natural resources. With its own sites, place names, structures and uses, the landscape enabled residents to meet their physical and social needs.

Channeling Historical Meanings Into The Present

Mart Stewart (2005) discusses the contrasts between human-nature relationships of West and Southeast during the early environmental movement. Whereas the Western environmental experience was defined by wilderness, Southerners' environmental relationships were largely shaped by agriculture. In the

Southeast, social and cultural practices were embedded in wildlands. Thus, Southern conceptions of “the natural” involved the interrelatedness of nature and humans rather than dichotomous views held by leaders of the early environmental movement. Due to their African heritage and racial oppression, slaves and their descendants assigned very different meanings to wildlands. For them, it was not a place for non-consumptive leisure and intellectual pursuits. Rather, it held meanings associated with work, danger, survival, kinship and community. Some of these meanings resided in the memories of the freed women and men who settled in Lower Richland. Baird (2014) points out that historical meanings find their way into contemporary landscapes through the memory. Landownership and resource commons facilitated access to private lands enabling community members to remember and enact historical meanings through subsistence and social practices. In doing so, community members imbued the land with historical meaning through the process of place making. What resulted was a place identity rooted in the socio-natural environment and a community landscape containing sites, structures and uses that reinforced meanings and behaviors associated with this identity or ‘outdoors people’.

Historical place relationships continue to inform how fishers engage with the natural environment, family and other community members today. Cresswell (1996) views *place* as a phenomenological experience involving elements of nature, social relationships and meaning that are inextricably linked. Together, they influence behavior in a place in which “Our actions are interpretations of text of a place that are recognizable to other people and are thus reinforced (p. 157). Therefore, practice plays

a major role constructing and sustaining places. Through memory and practice, the fishers' interviewed for this study re-enacted place relationships and thus reinforced place meanings despite fractures in the community landscape.

Chapter 5 explored the historical and cultural context of local African American fishers'. African worldviews and oppression shaped the environmental relationships and values of slaves and their descendants. The African Americans fishers interviewed for this study participate in many practices described in current literature including hunting, fishing and social bonding. These practices are rooted in both historical processes (i.e., slavery and Reconstruction) and place dynamics (i.e., landownership, subsistence activities, social relationships) that shaped local discourses around landownership, subsistence fishing, hunting and foraging and social bonding, which materialized in their community landscape. This historical and cultural context and resulting discourses are different from those of white Americans, especially leaders of the early environmental movement who shaped the institutional landscape of CNP.

This chapter offers a fresh perspective on African American environmental views, values and relationships. In contrast to urban residents examined in most studies who do not visit heavily forested areas, the African American fishers of rural Lower Richland are fond of wildlands and visit them often. In fact, the natural environment plays an important role in supporting their social relationships. This finding reveals that African American views and level of engagement with the natural environment can vary significantly and that more attention should be placed on identifying subgroups and understanding intragroup differences. These findings emerged through qualitative

inquiry rather than survey methods, revealing complex historical and place processes underlying local African American fishers understanding of wildlands which ultimately informs their perceptions of Congaree National Park. Chapter six reveals what happened CNP's institutional landscape was imposed upon fishers' community landscape.

CHAPTER 6

DISPLACEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE:

PERCEPTIONS AND CHOICES FOR PARK USE

On our way to CNP, Mary picks up her cousin Jean who lives about five minutes from CNP. Jean is 83 and like Mary, grew up fishing in Hopkins. As we ride along, Jean tells me that she hasn't fished at the park in many years. She explained that once park management closed Sims Road⁸, she could only reach her traditional fishing sites by using the boardwalk. The first time she attempted this route, a ranger stopped her stating that fishing equipment was not allowed on the boardwalk. Feeling unwelcomed, she left and never returned.

Once we pulled into the parking lot at CNP and began walking toward the Harry Hampton Visitor Center where the boardwalk begins, Jean looked confused. "I don't know where I am," she said. Mary reassured her, "You'll figure it out once we get in the park". As we walked along the boardwalk, neither Mary or Jean recognized their surroundings. Eventually, we came to an intersection where the boardwalk crosses Sims Road which is now a part of the park's trail system. The sign marking "Sims Trail" peaked their attention. When I told them the trail and Sims Road were one in the same, they

⁸ Sims Road was a major roadway used by the community to enter the swamp.

immediately abandoned the boardwalk and took the familiar path. It wasn't long before they were excitedly pointing out small streams and areas where flooding would cause ponds to form. "We fished them all!" they said ecstatically. Soon, we reached Wise Lake where they walked along the bank inspecting the water. They ascertained that fishing was still good there due to the abundance of surrounding vegetation, color of the water and the cleanliness of the area. They contemplated returning to fish at CNP however, Jean pointed out that fishing equipment was banned from the boardwalk and even if that restriction had been lifted, hauling fishing equipment from the parking lot to Wise Lake⁹ would be too strenuous.

On our way back to the parking lot, we ran into the park's superintendent. The women asked me to explain to him their problems with accessing their traditional fishing sites. So I did. He informed them that fishing gear was now allowed on the boardwalk however, he could not help community members gain the access they once had to the area due to restraints associated with wilderness management.

Once we were back inside Mary's truck, the two women talked more about the possibilities of fishing again at CNP. They were glad the boardwalk restriction had been lifted but reaching their traditional fishing holes was still a problem. The distance was too far.

Once CSNM received its wilderness designation in 1988, restrictions began to disrupt the community landscape. This institutional landscape, with its gates, prescribed

⁹ Wise Lake is 1.2 miles from the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

activities, regulations and law enforcement limited fishers' uses of the park while appearing to encourage those associated with white visitors. Most fishers interpreted this differential treatment as discrimination. Some also described additional barriers to visitation unrelated to fishing. In this chapter, I apply the framework constructed for this study to explore how wilderness management affected traditional fishing practices and possibilities for other types of uses at CNP and the ensuing perceptions shaping their choices for park use. Again, I enlist existing literature, fishers' accounts and my own experiences to present and discuss findings. This chapter provides a greater understanding of how the problem of African American non-visitation to wildlands and designated wilderness areas can be traced in part, to historical racial and class biases reproduced through wilderness legislation and understandings of the wildlands and outdoor recreation that diverge from dominant conceptions.

Restrictions and Resulting Perceptions

Reduced Access Traditional Fishing Sites

After CSNM was established in 1976, the community landscape remained relatively intact until around 1988 when the park gained its wilderness designation. What followed was an accumulation of policies and subsequent restrictions which fractured the community landscape. In 1988, CNP management became obliged to comply with the requirements of federal wilderness which presently includes 21,700 of the park's 26,545 acres. Designated wilderness areas are managed to create an untrammeled, natural, undeveloped and scenic landscape and provide opportunities for

solitude and “primitive” forms of recreation (US Congress, 1964). As such, structures (i.e., buildings, roads etc.), motor and mechanical vehicles and signage are prohibited unless deemed necessary for wilderness management. Consequently, most traditional fishing sites can now only be accessed by hiking long distances (over a mile in some areas). Since fishers must haul equipment to and from sites with the addition of their catch when returning, these trips can be especially taxing on older fishers and those with mobility issues.

The popular fishing location locally known as Francis was gated requiring fishers to walk at least a quarter of a mile to Cedar Creek and sometimes further to reach various fishing sites. Those who used the area as a boat landing can no longer do so as it is too difficult to transport a boat the distance from the parking lot to the creek. Eventually, keys to the gate were given to commercial outfitters for canoe tours. Observing the racial make-up of the outfitters and their clients, many fishers perceived the park as providing preferential treatment to white visitors.

One Saturday, I visited Francis to find possible research participants. Upon returning to my car, I encountered a man hobbling with his fishing gear towards Cedar Creek. Seeing he had a long way to go, I offered to help carry some of his equipment. He gladly accepted and as we walked toward Cedar Creek, I explained why I was visiting Francis that day. After hearing about my research, he began describing his experiences at the park. He explained that he was a disabled veteran and had ongoing problems with his legs. His family owned land less than a mile from Francis where he grew up fishing on Cedar Creek. When the gate was erected at Francis, he began having difficulties

reaching his usual fishing sites. Though he can still reach some sites on the creek, the journey was exhausting and he was unsure if he would be able to continue fishing at CNP as he got older.

He also told me about an encounter he had with an outfitter group. One day, he arrived at Francis to find the gate open and vehicles with canoes attached driving towards the creek. When he approached a staff member of the outfitter and inquired about their access, he was told, "If you pay the \$300 fee, you can drive in here too." Furious, the fisher walked away and began his labored hike to the creek as white visitors in their vehicles drove by (C8, 2014).

Other fishers told similar accounts of watching white visitors in vehicles pass as they walked to Cedar Creek. One angry fisher was blunt in his assessment of the situation.

If you white, why I gotta walk and you white, why I can't ride? See, that's the principle! But they can do anything they want to do but black people can't do it. They say the automobiles spill a lot of debris. Hell! I got an automobile, you got a brand new automobile, you can sweat oil. So how your automobile better than mine? You see? . . . But if you white, you can come in here cause it's right. You know what I'm saying? (C7, 2014)

These types of stories are not limited to the Francis area. Weston Lake, another popular community fishing site, was historically accessed by Sims Road. Community

members would drive or bike to the Weston Lake area to fish in the lake as well as other smaller ponds, streams and pools which appeared after flooding events. Sims Road was eventually closed making the boardwalk the shortest distance from the main parking lot to Weston Lake. The 2.4-mile boardwalk loop, CNP's most popular area, is a raised wooden platform that allows visitors to walk from the Harry Hampton Visitor Center to Weston Lake and back. It makes a small portion of the park accessible to the elderly, disabled and those who would rather not use the hiking trails. It also allows visitors to see the park during flooding events. However, fishing equipment was banned on the boardwalk and Weston Lake was closed due to what park officials describe as a litter problem. These policies halted almost all fishing in the Weston Lake area. Additional regulations prohibit other activities fishers' once enjoyed such as digging for bait and cooking in backcountry (designated wilderness) areas.

In reducing access to traditional fishing sites, wilderness management also exposed class disparities. Fishers with boats or access to hunt club properties adjacent to the park are able to reach more fishing areas than those who do not have such privileges. Boats can be expensive and hunt club memberships can range from \$125 to \$2500 annually. As a result, access for less wealthy participants confined to bank fishing was significantly lower than their counterparts with boats and hunt club memberships.

Lack of Culturally Relevant Activities to Accommodate Leisure Preferences

Most participants believed park restrictions not only alienated fishers but also discouraged the community as a whole from using the park. Some stated that the park

does not offer activities of interest to African American community members. Like the African Americans in the Rocky Mountain National Park study, many fishers viewed other park activities (i.e., hiking, camping, bird watching etc.) as “white activities”.

JD: I want ask you about the activities they provide at the park. They have hiking, camping and canoeing. Have you ever participated in any of them?

P3: Yeah, I went down there and I walked. They’ve got nice trails and stuff. It’s nice down there. But for me, I was walking to fish.

JD: So you’re more interested in fishing. Not necessarily hiking and camping?

P3: The reason I’m more interested in hunting and fishing than bird watching and camping is because the house I used to live in, we had one room and when the stars were out, you can count the stars at night.

JD: Wow, so you were already camping!

P3: That’s right!

JD: So do you think if you didn’t have any of those experiences already, would you do any of those activities at the park, if they were new to you?

P3: I would hunt and fish.

JD: But you wouldn’t do the other stuff?

P3: I ain’t worried about sleeping in no woods and all that!

JD: Why not?

P3: That’s for the white people to do, not us. (P3, 2014)

While most fishers held this view, some were open to camping. Yet this group was constrained by a variety of personal factors. One fisher said she would like to camp at the park with her grandchildren but she was too old to physically maneuver in the ways tent camping required. She stated that if the park had cabins or allowed RV's, she would be more likely to camp at CNP. Several fishers stated that they wouldn't mind camping at the park if they weren't already familiar with the landscape.

It's kind of like somebody who grew up on a lake. They might appreciate the lake but not as much as somebody who's never seen water! I grew up down there and I've seen birds and lots of them. I've seen big trees. I've seen a lot of swamp. I think that's the kind of things they enjoy. I can't understand it. I think I'd probably go to their part of the country and think having no trees is just a great idea! Let me walk around a little bit and see what I can see! (P1, 2014)

Fishers who were amenable to camping discussed possibilities within the context of fishing or hunting rather than sightseeing. These predilections stem from fishers' common history of subsistence practices which shaped a functional view of nature. When I inquired about scenic viewing, a common activity among the park's white visitors, fishers often replied that they did not understand the goal of sightseeing and that it did not seem interesting or adequate to engage their minds like fishing or hunting.

Lack of Culturally Relevant Facilities To Accommodate Leisure Preferences

In addition to the dearth of culturally relevant activities, fishers also talked about the park's lack of facilities to accommodate their preferred activities. For instance, some fishers stated that CNP would be a great setting for family and church gatherings, but because management limited music and cooking and the park had no facilities for games and sports they would not consider using the park for activities beyond fishing.

Most years, CNP works with South East Rural Community Outreach (SERCO), a local community organization, to co-host Swampfest. The purpose of this event is to celebrate local culture and encourage heritage tourism in Lower Richland through park tours, music, food, games, performances and other festive activities. I decided to attend Swampfest to better understand how the park engages with the community. During the weeks prior to the event, I discovered that activities would be split between the park and a community church because wilderness management limited cooking and music and had no space to accommodate large gatherings. This fissure was made apparent when two different schedules were posted for the event. Figure 6.1 (National Park Service, 2014c) shows the Swampfest schedule found on NPS/CNP's website listing activities at the park such as nature walks, an art competition and an educational program about the maroon communities that once existed on what is now park property. Figure 6.2 ("Congaree Swampfest," 2014) shows the schedule posted on the Congaree Swampfest Facebook site maintained by SERCO. It describes all of the other event activities (music, food, games, performances etc.) being held at the church.

The public is invited to join park rangers and volunteers for special programs to celebrate SwampFest at Congaree National Park on October 4. SwampFest is a local heritage tourism event, which will take place October 3-4 in Lower Richland County. All park programs are *free* and begin at the Visitor Center.

Park Program Schedule

9:00 am-5:00 pm: SwampFest Art Competition Entries on display at Harry Hampton Visitor Center. Co-sponsored by the Southeast Rural Community Outreach (SERCO) and the Friends of Congaree Swamp, the competition is an opportunity for young artists to showcase their talent while celebrating the park's wilderness resources. Students were asked to submit art to their teachers, depicting close up views of plants, animals, water, or recreational opportunities found within Congaree National Park. Park staff will select first place and honorable mentions from the entries. The first place entries will receive cash prizes, provided by the Friends of Congaree Swamp and SERCO. All entries will be on display through December.

9:30 am: Nature Discovery Walk

Join a volunteer naturalist to look and listen for animals in the forest along the boardwalk.

10:00 am-12:00 pm & 1:00-4:00 pm: Creative Congaree Children's Activities

Meet a park ranger in the screened porch for art activities. Participants may come and go.

11:00 am, 1:00 pm & 3:00 pm: Maroon Communities Walk

Join a park ranger on a short walk to hear stories of strength and survival in the Congaree floodplain.

11:00 am-3:30 pm: Boardwalk Briefs Every 30 minutes. A great way to see the park for the first time! Take a stroll on the boardwalk to see why Congaree is called a forest of giants.

A free shuttle will take visitors between the Old Mt. Moriah church site on Old Bluff Rd. and Congaree National Park's Harry Hampton Visitor Center from 11:00 am-4:00 pm on October 4. Additional programs and activities are sponsored by SERCO at the Harriet Barber House and Old Mt. Moriah church site in Lower Richland County. Festival information can be found at <http://www.congareeswampfest.com/>. Join Congaree National Park on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/CongareeNP>) or Twitter (@congaeenps). For more information visit <http://www.nps.gov/cong>.

Figure 6.1 Swampfest Schedule Posted on the NPS/CNP Website

CONGAREESWAMPFEST.COM

ANN NESBY LENNY WILLIAMS CARLOS SANTANA SECOND NATURE DANIEL DAVIS KANDACE BREON

TICKETS \$20 • \$25 AT GATE
BEWITCHED SALON
6420 GARNERS FERRY RD
COLUMBIA, SC 29209
(803) 647-7875
PAPA JAZZ RECORD SHOPPE
2014 GREENE STREET
COLUMBIA, SC 29205
803-256-0095
WWW.PAPAJAZZ.COM
AND ONLINE

BBQ BLUES AND JAZZ CONCERT
FRIDAY
OCTOBER 3RD, 2014
GATES OPEN 6PM CONCERT STARTS 7PM
LIVE BAND PERFORMANCES ON THE GROUNDS OF
THE HISTORICAL HARRIET BARBER HOUSE
116 BARBERVILLE LOOP, HOPKINS, SC 29061

2 DAY FESTIVAL EVENT • RAIN OR SHINE
CONGAREE SWAMPFEST

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 4TH, 2014
12 NOON TO 5PM FREE CONCERT
LIVE BANDS / ENTERTAINERS ON THE GROUNDS
THE OLD MT. MORIAH SITE
1000 OLD BLUFF ROAD, HOPKINS, SC 29061

LEE WILLIAMS AND THE SPIRITUAL QC'S

SUNDAY BEST FINALIST
TYSOT RECORDING ARTIST
DANETRA MOORE

SUNDAY BEST FINALIST
SOUTH CAROLINA'S OWN
KRISTEN JAMISON

Hosted By **JEFFREY LAMPKIN**

KAIZE ADAMS

TOM COOLIDGE

KATRINA BLANDING

FINE THYMES STRING BAND

ROD PEARSON

ALSO FEATURING: FRANCIS MARION YGB • ETERNAL VOICES • MT. MORIAH PRAISE DANCERS • LR JROTC
LR VETERANS FORMATION • EAU CLAIRE HIGH SCHOOL STEEL BAND • LADIES OF THE PICKIN' PARLOR
AND MANY OTHER FANTASTIC PERFORMERS & ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY!!

ALSO JOIN US FOR HAY-RIDES, KID GAMES, TOURS OF THE CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK, SEMINARS, AND LOTS MORE IN

THE CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

WANT TO BE A VENDOR? CALL (803)261-5596

SPONSORED BY **SERCO** RICHLAND COUNTY HOSPITALITY TAX FUND **CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK**

Figure 6.2 Swampfest Schedule Posted on the SERCO Facebook Site

I participated in festivities on the second day of the event. Roughly ten people attended the maroon communities tour that morning. Only two were African American, including myself. Afterwards, I left the park and drove to the church where over a hundred people, primarily black, were gathered on the church lawn enjoying performances, cooking, eating and socializing. Park staff was also present as well as some white attendees. Though I did not attend the entire two-day event, what I experienced instantiated the racial exclusion in wilderness management and demonstrated the difficulties it presents for the NPS's efforts to reach diverse groups.

Issues of access related to traditional fishing sites and leisure preferences do not relate to findings of other studies examining non-visitation because few have considered African Americans who visit wildlands areas. Studies probing African American usage patterns in places like designated wilderness are missing from the literature. Issues of access associated with activity preferences support the findings of other studies showing African American preferences for spaces accommodating group activities (Dwyer & Gobster, 1992; Gobster & Delgado, 1993).

Dangerous Wild Animals

Some fishers perceived the park to be dangerous. However, these sentiments were not spoken with trepidation. Rather, they were derived from extensive experience fishing in its remote areas far from the boardwalk and well-worn trails. Fishing sites were often located in areas where they were more likely to encounter dangerous wild animals. Fishers spoke of the aggressiveness of female hogs protecting their young and

water moccasins that will sometimes chase an individual if disturbed. During a group interview, a fisher recalled an encounter with an alligator while fishing on the Dead River¹⁰.

We had a sixteen-footer out there! That's the last time I went fishing out there. An alligator passed me as big as my boat! And I got out of there. Yeah! My little pontoon two-man, 10 foot boat . . . The water got up and I was using my trolling motor . . . I had a 36 thrust trolling motor. I went on the right-hand side . . . most of the time I stay on the left-hand side but I went on the right-hand side and that water flowing so high and all my 36 horse could use and an alligator passed me and I said Lord, please don't – (C4, 2014).

Another fisher told a story equally frightening. While walking through dense vegetation to reach a fishing hole, he stumbled upon a water moccasin. Expecting the snake to strike or give chase if he ran away, the participant stood his ground and the two faced one another in a standoff of sorts. After a few minutes, the snake relented and quietly slithered away (C1, 2014).

While fishing with participants, I was constantly reminded to be aware of my surroundings – “look ahead”, “look behind”, “look up in the trees”, “keep an eye out”, “keep an ear out”, “keep your tackle box closed”, “zip up your backpack when you finish using it”. Unsurprisingly, their keen senses were able to detect movement and sound

¹⁰ The Dead River, known as Bates Old River by park officials, crosses park property.

more readily than mine. I marveled at how they were able to fish, talk, laugh and eat while continuously scanning the environment for animal threats.

While the threat of animal attacks was not enough to deter most fishers from CNP, it discouraged some. A few fishers stopped fishing at the park not merely because they were afraid of wild animals but for what they perceived as an inability to protect themselves if attacked. Firearms were prohibited in the park until 2014. Some fishers believed this policy encouraged a false sense of safety for park visitors.

The swamp is a dangerous place and once you get in there, all of it's gonna look alike. It's gonna look alike so if you're not comfortable with that then you're gonna easily get yourself in trouble and I think the only other thing about the park is that in the zeal of promoting the park and the social things, they don't really advise people to the real concerns of the park. I think they need to do a better job of letting people know that this is a swamp area that has wildlife, and untamed wildlife and it holds a certain amount of risk and dangers when you go in there. People just see it as a – when you say a 'park', what comes to mind? A civilized place. But that's not what it is. It's a wilderness area and it's a lot of it. In the old days, you had to be really careful with that. Animals haven't changed. So it's nothing tame about it. (P1, 2014)

This sense of danger and the inability to fend off wild animals discouraged several participants from fishing at CNP.

The accumulation of park restrictions altered fishers' sense of place associated with the area that is now CNP. Ironically, they had greater access when it was owned by private landowners than when it became public land under the jurisdiction of the U.S. government. Regulations enforcing the Wilderness Act greatly limited access, a benefit which was historically seminal to fishers' survival and social life. With the imposition of multiple regulations limiting the expression of these place relationships, the community landscape disintegrated engendering animosity, perceptions of discrimination and ultimately, alienation.

Identifying Discrimination

Wilderness management at CNP imposed restrictions that either severely limited or banned most black community practices while promoting the interests and preferences of the park's white visitors. These disparities caused most participants to believe their alienation was the result of racial discrimination and that the park was created for white outsiders at the expense of the black community. "In reality," one fisher alleged, "they're catering to one group of people. And if you want to know the truth, I think that they take property from one group of people so another group of people can enjoy it!" (P1, 2014)

Though I see some truth in their claims, I think it is important to distinguish between the various kinds of discrimination park visitors can experience. Pincus and Ehrlich (1994) describe three types of discrimination: individual, institutional and structural. Individual discrimination occurs when members of a group treat those of

another group differently or harmfully. Institutional discrimination refers to policies of institutions operated by majority groups that intentionally impose differential or harmful effects on minorities. Lastly, structural discrimination results when policies of institutions run by dominant groups unintentionally treat minorities differently or cause them harm.

Fishers report to have perceived institutional discrimination at CNP. They believe that NPS officials knowingly and willfully instituted policies that would negatively affect them and members of the black community. As I will discuss further in the next chapter, my conversations with NPS/CNP employees showed that they recognized how wilderness management adversely affected fishers', understood fishers' perceptions, sympathized with their plight. I did not discern intentionality that would mark institutional discrimination at CNP. Perhaps this issue deserves a greater examination of NPS organizational culture to gain a better understanding of whether and how institutional discrimination operates.

Though individual and institutional discrimination were not apparent in this study, structural discrimination stemming from exclusions in the Wilderness Act was blatantly clear. For fishers, environmental values and views are shaped by a place history where consumptive uses provided sustenance and reinforced community cohesion. This understanding of nature is still relevant today as fishers and community members continue to prefer natural settings that will accommodate these values and uses. Wilderness management at CNP limits or prohibits fishers from enacting these environmental relationships while encouraging those (i.e., leisure, scenic viewing and

intellectual pursuits) primarily associated with the park's white visitors. Because these inequalities fall along racial lines, they expose the structural discrimination in the Wilderness Act.

Park Use Choices

Sharaievska et al. (2014) identify three common ways park users respond to perceived discrimination including physical or verbal confrontation, withdrawal and passive acceptance and adjusting leisure behavior. These reactions are mediated by a variety of factors including victims' subjectivities, the type environment in which discrimination takes place and the balance of power between victim and violator.

In this study, physical and verbal confrontation did not occur since most fishers' perceived institutional discrimination rather than individual discrimination. Fishers responded by either withdrawing or passively accepting their displacement. Some fishers chose to seek less restrictive environments by fishing at alternative sites outside the park. Due to increasing privatization, encroaching urban sprawl and limited access to hunt clubs, fishers often traveled to fishing sites beyond the Lower Richland community, many of which were also inaccessible for those who lacked the financial means and certain types of social capital. In many cases, fishers needed to own a boat or know someone with access to fishing holes on private property. A few had access to sites like Fort Jackson where they reported friendly law enforcement, good fishing and fewer restrictions.

I found two types of passive acceptance among the fishers I interviewed. Some chose to accept park regulations even though they had access to other fishing sites within and beyond the community. Others were forced to continue fishing at CNP due lack of mobility, financial income and social capital that would enable them to fish elsewhere.

Wilderness management made sites like Weston Lake and other traditional fishing holes in the interior of the park much less accessible thereby limiting fishing to a few primary areas. The quality of fishing at some of these sites is poor. Many fishers attributed this problem to overfishing caused by too many people fishing in too few locations.

Fishers also described actions they had taken or should be pursued to create more equitable conditions at the park. Some tried discussing possible solutions with park officials they encountered while fishing. Others attempted to arrange a meeting between fishers and park officials. One participant contemplated contacting a local news station to call attention to their situation. Fishers' reported consistent responses from park employees who were regretful but firm in explaining their obligation to comply with federal legislation. None of the fishers I interviewed attempted to mobilize on a broader scale. In fact, most expressed defeat and the belief that they were powerless challenge federal law.

Theoretical Findings

The findings of this study answer some questions arising from theories of marginality, discrimination and ethnicity/subculture in explaining reasons for African American non-visitation to designated wilderness and other wildland areas.

Marginality Theory

Some evidence of marginality can be found in the correlation between class and access. Fishers who could afford boats and hunt club memberships or possessed certain types of social capital had greater access to fishing sites in the community and beyond. This finding helps resolve several challenges for marginality theory. For instance, Floyd (1999) points out that marginality theory does not address on-site usage patterns or how contemporary discrimination affects visitation. Nor does it account for variations in socioeconomic status within groups.

This study addresses each of these concerns. Fishers who could not find alternatives through financial or other means, were forced to accept displacement and confined their fishing to relatively few sites. In this case, structural discrimination exacerbated marginality and created differential usage patterns between well-to-do fishers and those with less discretionary income.

Discrimination Theory

The findings of this study elucidate uncertainties raised by discrimination theory. Several authors note that the types of discrimination park users can experience are not

well-understood (M. Floyd, 1999; Sharaievska et al., 2014). This research adds clarity by demonstrating how structural discrimination has an adverse effect on visitation at CNP. Exclusions in the Wilderness Act resulted in policies and practices that greatly reduced access to traditional fishing sites and limited uses valued by African American fishers and the local community. These findings call attention to the need for more research on structural forms of discrimination embedded in the values, beliefs and ideologies held by environmental advocates, lawmakers and other powerful stakeholders who set forth agendas for park creation and operation.

Ethnicity/Subcultural Theory

This study supports the claims of ethnicity\subcultural theory and addresses some of its limitations. Findings are consistent with its hypothesis that race and ethnicity inform leisure preferences and that cultural differences may cause some groups to avoid recreational spaces or activities perceived as associated with another racial/ethnic group.

Floyd (1999) notes the meager attention ethnicity/subcultural theory gives to intragroup differences and identifying specific variables contributing to non-visitation. The findings of this research address both weaknesses. Firstly, it points to differences in the ways rural and urban African Americans may perceive wildlands. Whereas urban residents in most studies express fear of wildlands and hence do not visit them, the fishers' of rural Lower Richland are fond of fishing in the remote corners of the Congaree forest. This positive view is steeped in history and place processes where,

resource commons, landownership, subsistence practices and social relationships supported the emergence of an environmental heritage prompting some to identify as 'outdoors people'.

Secondly, history and place shaped ways of understanding and engaging with the natural environment different from those supported by the proponents of the Wilderness Act. Fishers' historical, cultural and place contexts necessitated that they know nature through work, kinship and community. In contrast, the historical, cultural and place context of the Wilderness Act is centered in Western Romantic ideals that venerate wilderness as a place for leisure, scenic viewing, intellectual pursuits and spiritual inspiration. These values were privileged in the Wilderness Act while those of wildland workers, i.e., African American fishers of Lower Richland were excluded. At CNP these values were written into the landscape through wilderness management resulting in displacement and alienation of fishers and the broader community. In this case, racial and class biases embedded in the Wilderness Act were identified as variables contributing to non-visitation.

My examination of African American fishers in Lower Richland supports some elements of existing theoretical frames, illuminates their limitations and encourages a broader conceptualization of processes and interactions as outlined in the framework created for this study. These contributions arise from a different approach to the issue of African American non-visitation through an examination history, place, perceptions and usage patterns of southern, rural African Americans who participate in wildland recreation.

This chapter encompasses several components of the framework developed for this study. It describes how policies associated with the NPS's institutional landscape failed to accommodate fishers' place relationship and therefore, disrupted fishers' community landscape making traditional fishing sites inaccessible and restricting activities valued by participants and the community. These processes of estrangement combined with fishers' personal characteristics such as leisure preferences, attitudes toward nature, mobility and socioeconomic status engendered perceptions discrimination and danger which ultimately led participants to change their recreational behaviors. While some found alternative sites to fish, personal characteristics caused others to passively accept displacement.

In addition to fear of wildlands, socioeconomic disparities, procrastination, unawareness, lack of culturally relevant activities and spaces and perceptions of discrimination described in prior studies, this chapter revealed that non-visitation can also be linked to actual experiences of structural discrimination.

While park policies appeared ostensibly rigid, my interviews with park staff revealed flexibility and the possibility of future compromises. However, the solutions for finding common ground will take a concerted effort on both sides.

CHAPTER 7

BARRIERS, RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Because fishers held such strong views toward CNP, it was imperative that I interview employees to verify the policies and events they mentioned and offer NPS/CNP officials the opportunity to respond to their claims. I also wanted to explore possibilities for improving access to park resources. The interviews surfaced opportunities to address fishers' concerns and overcome obstacles to engaging the broader community. This chapter explores employees' perceptions, discusses institutional barriers and offers suggestions for promoting greater access and engaging the African American within Lower Richland and beyond.

Views of NPS/CNP Employees

During my interviews with park employees, they expressed awareness of how wilderness management at the park impacted local African American fishers' traditional practices and how it may have been perceived as racial discrimination. They also regretted their inability to change the circumstances. During our discussion about unequal access between African American fishers and white canoeists at the site locally known as Francis, one employee agreed with fishers' assessment of discrimination (E1, 2014). When I told another NPS employee about fishers' desire for more access to

traditional fishing sites, he responded, “I totally understand that perspective. On the one hand my personal feeling is yes, we should be doing that, it makes sense but then on the other hand, if we’re mandated to follow what the law is saying then we can only do so much in wilderness” (E2, 2015).

Statements like these demonstrated employees’ understanding and sensitivity toward fishers’ plight and their inability to make the park more accessible. Yet, they also affirmed the structural discrimination resulting from exclusions in the Wilderness Act.

Institutional Barriers

Disseminating Information

One key finding of this research was fishers’ unawareness of how park policies and boundaries changed over the years. For instance, some restrictions discussed in the previous chapter have been lifted. At Francis, park management barred all vehicles from entering the gate and also built a larger parking lot close by where outfitters can conduct canoe tours and fishers can walk a shorter distance to Cedar Creek¹¹. Fishers are now allowed to carry their equipment on the boardwalk, Weston Lake was reopened and visitors can now carry firearms in the park. However, these revisions were announced through the park website, a location unknown by most fishers.

Ongoing expansions have also changed park boundaries. Surprisingly, CNP is locally known as “the monument”, a name referencing CSNM (1976-2003). In fact, a few fishers did not understand where I was referring to when I asked about “Congaree

¹¹ Some fishers’ claim this area is “fished out” or overfished.

National Park”. This unawareness reflects limited engagement possibly fueling fishers’ alienation.

CSNM was a smaller property than CNP however, it appears that fishers continue to conceptualize park boundaries as they were when the area was known as CSNM. Sometimes fishers would state they no longer fished at “the monument” only to later describe fishing excursions on the Dead River or various locations on Cedar Creek which run through park property.

When I explained this finding to a park employee, he admitted that he wasn’t aware of fishers’ misconception of park boundaries. Yet, he understood how signage demarcating the park’s boundaries was lacking and affirmed that official signs had been ordered and will soon be installed. While the dearth of proper signage is partly to blame for fishers lack of awareness, I believe it is also rooted in an ongoing process of alienation and signifies a lack of communication between park employees and local African American fishers.

Staffing

CNP’s efforts toward community engagement are constrained by limited resources. The park has a small staff with limited time to devote to community engagement. This is complicated by the recent reassignments in which several chiefs of divisions transferred to other locations within the NPS, including their Chief of Outreach. These types of shifts are common within the NPS. Employees achieve higher ranks with better compensation by transferring to different locations every few years.

Unfortunately, these frequent changes may impede the development of meaningful and lasting relationships between CNP and the local community. One of the park employees I interviewed hoped to eventually work on community engagement once new personnel arrived. However, he did not expect changes to occur in the near future due to the cumbersome nature of the NPS hiring process and the need for management to focus on stabilizing park staffing and programming.

Recommendations

In 1994, U.S. President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 mandating all federal land managers to develop environmental justice strategies to identify “differential patterns of consumption of natural resources among minority populations and low-income populations” (Executive Order 12898, 1994). It also required them to ensure that their policies did not exclude any group due to race, ethnicity, or national origin. As an agency charged with administering federal lands, the NPS is legally bound to comply with the directives set forth by this law. This study offers a foundation for which NPS/CNP managers can begin to assess differential patterns of use among its minority visitors and assure equal access to natural resources within park boundaries.

Improving accessibility for fishers and engaging the surrounding community can be accomplished in variety of ways. Several authors suggest place-based strategies to help natural resource managers cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with local communities (Kruger, Hall, & Stiefel, 2008; D. R. Williams & Stewart, 1998). Kruger and her colleagues urge natural resource managers to understand place meanings and the

discourses around the use of natural resources to foster engagement (2008). For local African American fishers, the place that is now CNP holds meanings associated with subsistence and community bonding. Therefore, consumptive uses and social relationships are central to their discourses about natural resources. Understanding these discourses would aid managers in developing settings and policies to accommodate the meanings, views and values of fishers and the larger community.

Some recommendations may demand considerable time and resources along with effort from the community. The following suggestions are informed by my conversations with park employees and fishers, existing literature as well as my own observations during the course of this research.

Access to Information

Local fishers need to be apprised of changes in park policies and boundaries through known and accessible outlets. In addition to the NPS/CNP website, information can be disseminated through park rangers including law enforcement and officers employed with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) who patrol areas adjacent to the park. Trusted community organizations such as SERCO and local churches can also be utilized. If funds are available, park management could try sending periodic mailings such as postcards listing recent changes and upcoming events.

Williams and Stewart recommend that management plans be communicated in “locally recognized, place-specific terms”. Local history and landscapes, community identity, ethnic heritage and values (e.g. spiritual, family, health, black landownership)

should be considered in the development of park programming and policies and enlisted to communicate plans in ways relevant to fishers and the local community.

Access to Fishing Sites

Access to fishing sites can be improved by extending the park's trail system in ways that allow fishers to reach fishing holes without needing a hunt club membership permission to cross private property. Some participants suggested that a shuttle be made available to fishers several times a week or on weekends to allow them access to locations they were once able to reach by motor vehicle or bike. This, of course, would require that wilderness designation be lifted in some areas (e.g., old logging or hunting roads within the park) to allow a shuttle to be used. Wilderness can be "un-designated" through a community grassroots effort and support from the park, NPS regional and national officials and Congress. However, fishers will first need to overcome feelings of powerlessness, begin to mobilize and commit to long-term advocacy. Providing greater access to fishing sites may also alleviate possible overfishing in areas commonly visited. Stocking fish at these locations may help recover declining populations.

Another suggestion would be to not convert newly acquired lands to designated wilderness. These spaces could be designed to provide better access to fishing sites or accommodate facilities for gatherings, music, exercise, sports and other outdoor activities valued by community members. This too would require the support of park management, regional and national administrators and Congress.

Activities and Programming

Some fishers recommended that CNP offer family fishing clinics. Not only would this kind of programming attract more African Americans to the park, it would forestall what fishers perceive as a dying tradition in Lower Richland. In addition to modern day distractions such as electronics and busy schedules, fishers also attribute the decline of intergenerational fishing to the dwindling number of community fishing holes.

Park management could also encourage African American visitation by lending more attention to its cultural resources. Structures built by slaves including cattle mounts and dikes still stand at CNP and a study of a maroon community that once existed within the park boundary is currently underway. Tours or educational talks focusing on the stories behind these formations would draw African American tourists and the numerous community members, scholars and enthusiasts studying local history and genealogy. This type of programming would also complement broader efforts to foster heritage tourism in Lower Richland.

Hiring

Finally, future hires should include African Americans who will be placed in leadership positions visible to fishers and the general public. This strategy could aid CNP in developing culturally relevant programming and a more inclusionary presentation. It would also help NPS dismantle the popular perception of wilderness as a “white space”. Several fishers recommended that the park hire a community liaison. In the past, community members worked in lower-level positions at the park and were invaluable in

helping park officials communicate with other community members about land issues and policies. Creating a liaison position or building related job duties into existing ones might be worthwhile as the NPS seeks to engage diverse groups.

Most of the suggestions listed here will require CNP to dedicate time and resources to developing a landscape relevant all park visitors and the surrounding community. Though some tasks may seem quite daunting, the NPS's current diversity dilemma demands a new way of understanding the environment, environmental issues and the problem of non-visitation. Engaging diversity may also call for correcting injustices and charting new courses for environmental protection.

Conclusion

This research examined the factors leading to alienation and non-visitation among local African American fishers at CNP. Through an exploration of history and place, I discovered the emergence of two cultural landscapes in the forests along the Congaree River – a community landscape arising from fishers' place history of landownership, subsistence practices and harmonious social relations and an institutional landscape constructed from NPS regulations and practices informed by the Wilderness Act. As a law enacting racial and class prejudices of the early environmental movement's leaders, the Wilderness Act transferred these biases into regulations governing land use. These restrictions limited or prohibited local African Americans' traditional practices and encouraged those associated with CNP's white visitors. This disparity caused fishers to perceive discrimination at the park prompting some to find

alternative sites to fish. Those who lack the financial means to participate in boat fishing or join hunt clubs and the social capital to fish on private or restricted lands were often forced to accept displacement. Though some individuals attempted to engage park officials in a discussion about possibilities for improving access for fishers, there have been no efforts to organize around potential changes. Rather, fishers appear to feel defeated and are unaware of flexibilities within wilderness policies.

Because this study focuses on African Americans who visit wildlands and the role of history and place dynamics in influencing their activities, it contributes to literatures examining non-visitation and park use in a variety of ways. Firstly, it defies generalizations about African American fear of wildlands and points to intragroup differences in the ways wildlands are viewed and engaged. Secondly, it helps resolve challenges for marginality, discrimination and ethnicity/subcultural theories explaining the reasons for African American non-visitation to wildlands. Lastly, it grounds and elucidates Byrne and Wolch's framework by offering empirical data showing that the histories of park provision *and* potential users along with place are important factors contributing to racialization of park use.

Future Research

This research focused on African American wildland relations and the reasons for non-visitation to national parks. Further research on relevant topics would expand our understanding of African American environmental relationships and non-visitation to national parks. For instance, some fishers' identified Lower Richland community

members as 'outdoors people'. During our conversations, participants' statements would frequently vacillate between fishing and hunting. I focused on fishing because it is still allowed on a restricted basis at CNP whereas hunting is banned. However, a study of both hunting and fishing would broaden the understanding of their environmental relationships and further expand our conceptualization of African American environmental relations.

Black landownership was another topic of importance to fishers. Most were landowners and some often rented their property to local hunt clubs and individual hunters as a way to supplement their income. A few believed black landowners were treated unfairly during federal land acquisition processes to create the park. In her testimony before Congress, Hattie Fruster (2003) listed the ways in which environmental preservation threatens black landownership in Lower Richland. For example, she claimed that the park's International Biosphere Reserve designation endowed the United Nations with the right to restrict land uses on properties surrounding the park. Some fishers also discussed threats due to urban sprawl. A deeper look at the linkages between black landownership, the local economy, conservation/preservation projects, urban sprawl, community members' environmental relationships, and participation in legal matters related to property rights is needed.

Fishers' personal characteristics may also influence their sense of place, usage patterns and the extent to which they were affected by park restrictions. The effects of class, gender, age, education and disability could be explored in-depth to understand how wilderness policies shape different types of use and issues of access. For instance, a

few of the women I interviewed discussed how longer walking distances to fishing holes decreased their sense of safety. There also seems to be a decline of African American women fishing at CNP.

This study did not include fishers who still might participate in subsistence fishing. Though I did not encounter these individuals during my research, park employees suspect there may be a small contingent of subsistence fishers using the park. Additionally, research on fishers' alternative sites could lend more insight into how fishers respond to other natural resource management policies and practices. Lastly, fishers' and hunters' traditional knowledge could be valuable for increasing the understanding of ecological processes and environmental change at CNP.

Final Thoughts

Designated wilderness in national parks are places that supposedly symbolize American democracy. But as I have learned, they were not created for everyone. I am not saying that wilderness should not be understood or enjoyed in a Romantic sense. However, federal law should not privilege this environmental relationship over others. The Wilderness Act is incongruous with America's claim to equality. Rather than expressing a common heritage it makes our differences more conspicuous and alienates potential supporters of environmental protection. At a time when environmental problems threaten our quality of life, we should reassess the Wilderness Act to make sure it aligns with twenty-first century ideals and addresses real concerns about relationship between diversity, social equality and the environment.

The futures of the local community and CNP are intertwined. Park restrictions occur within the context of other land pressures such as hunt clubs and other possible conservation/preservation projects in the area. Most crucial, however, are the burgeoning changes associated with the encroaching expansion of South Carolina's capitol. As the Lower Richland community confronts the effects of urban sprawl, park officials would do well to find ways to engage the local community on issues central to its mission of protecting the Congaree River and surrounding forests. This cannot be done in an atmosphere of alienation and animosity. It is my hope that this research will help prepare the way for reform or place-based solutions to ensure equitable access to resources in designated wilderness areas.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FISHERS WHO CURRENTLY FISH AT CNP

Part 1: Background Information & Park Connections

1. Where are you from? Where do you currently live? How far do you travel to get to your fishing locations?
2. How do you know about CNP?
3. How long have you been coming to CNP?
4. When do you fish at CNP? Why? (Seasonally, weekends etc.)
5. Where do you fish at CNP?

Are you, your family or friends historically connected to the land here or the surrounding area? How?

Part 2: Activities and Perceptions

6. What is fishing for you? (Recreation? Relaxation? Part of your livelihood? A way to connect to your past? etc . . .)
7. Would you say that you somehow need the fish you catch here? How so?
8. How often do you fish at CNP?
9. What is it about this place that brings you back to fish here?
10. What memories connect you to this place?

11. Do you catch a lot of fish here or a special kind of fish?
12. Do you come here with anyone?
13. Who/what do you usually interact with when you're fishing?
14. Tell me about your encounters with animals or interactions with other features of the land.
15. I've heard people say that they connect to this place in a spiritual way. How would you describe your connection to this place?
16. Are there other places in the park that are important or meaningful to you? Where are they? What makes them special?

Activities, Locations & Land Uses

17. Are there places in the park you won't fish or prefer not to go? Why?
18. Weston Lake is now open for fishing. Would you or do you fish there? Why or why not?
19. Are there other places you fish outside of CNP? If so, where are they located and why do you fish there? Do you prefer those places to CNP? Why or why not?
20. Besides fishing, what other outdoor activities do you? Who do you do them with? Where do you do them? Why do you choose to do them there? If you don't do any other activities at CNP, why not?
21. Do you know of any other ways the local African-American community use the park?

Perceptions of CNP

22. What do you know about CNP?

How it was established

The type of people who visit

23. The type of activities and programs it offers. Do you or would you participate in any of them? Why or why not?

24. What are your perceptions of the park?

Park staff

Park policies

Park law enforcement

Physical environment

25. Has your experience changed since you've been fishing at CNP? How so?

26. How do you think park staff perceive you?

27. What have your encounters with park staff and other park visitors been like? Were any encounters significant to you? How have they affected your experience at CNP?

Part 3: Community Engagement

28. What do you want park staff to know about you? The local community?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FISHERS WHO NO LONGER FISH AT CNP

Part 1: Background Information & Park Connections

1. Where are you from? Where do you currently live? How far do you travel to get to your fishing location?
2. How do you know about CNP?
3. When did you fish at CNP?
4. How often did you fish there? Why? (Seasonally, weekends etc.)
5. Are you, your family or friends historically connected to park land or the surrounding area? How?

Part 2: Activities and Perceptions

6. What is fishing for you? (Recreation? Relaxation? Part of your livelihood? A way to connect to your past? etc . . .)
7. Would you say that you somehow need the fish you catch? How so?
8. When you fished at CNP, where did you fish?
9. What made you return to the places you fished? Memories? Subsistence fishing?
10. Did you catch a lot of fish there or a special kind of fish?
11. Did you go there with anyone?
12. Who/what did you usually interact with when you were fishing at CNP?
13. Tell me about your encounters with animals or interactions with other features of the land.

14. I've heard people say that they connect CNP in a spiritual way. How would you describe your connection to this place?
15. Are there other places in the park that are important or meaningful to you? Where are they? What made them special?

Perceptions of CNP

16. What do you know about CNP?
- How it was established
 - The type of people who visit
17. The type of activities and programs it offers. Do you or would you participate in any of them? Why or why not?
18. Why do you no longer fish at CNP?
19. What are your perceptions of the park? (If not answered in previous question)
- Park staff
 - Park policies
 - Park law enforcement
 - Park land/biophysical environment
20. How do you think park staff perceive local African-American fishers?
21. What were your encounters with park staff and other park visitors like when you fished at CNP? Were any encounters significant to you? How so?

Activities, Locations & Land Uses

22. Were there places in the park you didn't fish or preferred not to go? Why?
23. I heard that the closing of Weston Lake alienated some African-Americans from CNP.
Weston Lake is now open for fishing again. Would you go there now? Why or why not?
24. Where do you currently fish? Why do you fish there? Why do you prefer those places to CNP?
25. Besides fishing, what other outdoor activities do you? Who do you do them with?
Where do you do them? Why do you choose to do them there? If you don't do any other activities at CNP, why not?
26. Do you know of any other ways the local African-American community use the park?

Part 3: Community Engagement

27. What changes would need to happen for you to return to fish at CNP?
28. What do you think CNP could do to attract more African-Americans from the local community?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FISHERS WHO HAVE NEVER FISHED AT CNP

Part 1: Background Information & Park Connections

1. Where are you from? Where do you currently live? How far do you travel to get to your fishing location?
2. Are you, your family or friends historically connected to park land or the surrounding area? How?

Part 2: Activities and Perceptions

3. What is fishing for you? (Recreation? Relaxation? Part of your livelihood? A way to connect to your past? etc . . .)
4. Would you say that you somehow need the fish you catch? How so?
5. Where do you currently fish? Why do you fish there?
6. What makes you return to the places you fish? Memories? Subsistence fishing?
7. Did you catch a lot of fish there or a special kind of fish?
8. Did you go there with anyone?
9. Besides fishing, what other outdoor activities do you? Who do you do them with?
Where do you do them? Why do you choose to do them there? If you don't do any other activities at CNP, why not?
10. Do you know of any other ways the local African-American community uses park land?

Perceptions of CNP

11. What do you know about CNP?
12. How it was established
13. The type of people who visit
14. The type of activities and programs it offers. Do you or would you participate in any of them? Why or why not?
15. Why don't you fish at CNP?
16. What are your perceptions of the park? (If not answered in previous questions)
 - Park staff
 - Park policies
 - Park law enforcement
 - Biophysical environment
17. I heard that the closing of Weston Lake alienated some African-Americans from CNP.
Weston Lake is now open for fishing again. Would you fish there? Why or why not?
18. How do you think park staff perceive local African-American fishers?

Part 3: Community Engagement and Demographic Information

19. What do you think CNP could do to attract more local African-American fishers?

APPENDIX B – MAP OF CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

